HdO

The Modern Poets

(*Ṭabaqāt al-shuʿarāʾ al-muḥdathīn*)

طبقات الشعراء المحدثين

لعبد الله بن المعتز

ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Muʿtazz

Introduced, translated, and annotated by

Geert Jan van Gelder

BRILL

The Modern Poets (*Ṭabaqāt al-shuʿarāʾ al-muḥdathīn*)

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Preface

Years ago (I cannot retrieve the date) the Editors of that splendid series, the Library of Arabic Literature (LAL), asked me if I would consider making a new edition and translation (the first complete one in any language) of *Ṭabaqāt al-shuʿarāʾ al-muḥdathīn* (usually translated as *The Classes of the Modern Poets*) by ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Muʿtazz, an Abbasid prince, one of the leading poets of his time, whose other works include a seminal treatise on literary criticism, and who, unfortunately, reigned as Caliph in Baghdad for merely one day, only to be killed the following day or soon after, in 286/908. I replied that it seemed a very worthy though daunting project. I have been acquainted with his book on Modern Poets for some fifty years (I acquired a copy in May 1975, shortly before moving from Amsterdam to Groningen) and, many years ago, I read sections on some interesting poets (Bashshār ibn Burd and Abū l-Hindī) with undergraduates in Groningen. Busy with other things at the time, I declined the invitation by the LAL editors. Several years on, in 2022, looking for something new to occupy myself in my retirement, I decided to embark on an annotated translation, having ascertained from the LAL editors that nobody else had been commissioned with it in the meantime.

Regretfully, I could, however, not contemplate offering my labours to LAL. Firstly, I decided against making a new edition, which inclusion in the LAL series would require; it would have greatly increased the labour and I did not see the need to improve on the critical edition by the well-known and prolific Egyptian editor, ʿAbd al-Sattār Aḥmad Farrāj. Secondly, the LAL guidelines insist on limited annotation, whereas Ibn al-Muʿtazz's text needs lots of it. Moreover, I abhor endnotes, as used in LAL publications.

So I am grateful to the LAL Editors for the suggestion, while perhaps ungratefully turning to another publisher. Abdurraouf Oueslati, of Brill, has been encouraging as soon, at an early stage, as I informed him of my work on Ibn al-Muʿtazz.

I have been reluctant to bother colleagues with the many little problems I came across; most of them, whether employed or retired, are busy with their own projects. I hereby thank those who volunteered to look at some of my queries and quandaries. Gert Borg (Nijmegen) made some valuable suggestions, and Abeer al-Abbasi (ʿAbīr ʿAbd Allāh ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-ʿAbbāsī, at King Faisal University, Jeddah) sent me numerous email messages with many, often lengthy, useful comments and suggestions after she received my list of problems. I apologise to her for making her look at some verses that she must have found distasteful. I am intensely grateful to Nefeli Papoutsakis (University of Münster),

who painstakingly went through the whole text, making numerous minor corrections, solving a good number of problems, and offering valuable suggestions. I thank the two reviewers for sending to Brill their positive reports and useful suggestions, and the editors of the Handbook of Oriental Studies for accepting the book in their series. Sheila Ottway, my wife of more than half a century (a few years longer than I have known Ibn al-Muʿtazz), again improved my English. Thanks are due to TAT Zetwerk (Pieter te Velde, Sanne Hadfy-Kovács et al.) for the smooth production process and the expert and meticulous typesetting.

It is customary to add that "all remaining errors are my own". But no, not all! No doubt some are mine, but some others must be laid at the door of the wretched nineteenth-century copyist of the single manuscript. We must thank him profusely for the survival of Ibn al-Muʿtazz's important and entertaining text and could almost curse him for his sloppiness.

Geert Jan van Gelder
Haren, the Netherlands, January 2026

Abbreviations

AD	*Anno Domini*
AH	*Anno Hegirae*
b.	ibn (used only in index)
bt	bint or ibnat (used only in index)
d.	died
EAL	Julie Scott Meisami and Paul Starkey (eds), *Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature*
ed.	edited by
(eds)	(editors)
EI2	*The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, New [= Second] Edition
EI3	*Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Third Edition
EIr	*Encyclopædia Iranica*
fl.	*floruit*
GAL	Carl Brockelmann, *Geschichte der Arabischen Litteratur*
GAS	Fuat Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums*
MS(s)	manuscript(s)
pl.	plural
Q	Qur'an (followed by name of Sura, Sura number, and verse number)
r.	reigned
sg.	singular
ṭ.	*ṭabʿah* (printing or edition)
tr.	translator, translation
(tr)	tribe or clan (used only in index)
vols.	volumes
vs(s).	verse(s)[1]

References to Arabic dictionaries are to root entries (usually three consonants, e.g. *ḤLL*, *KhLJ*).

1 I use "verse" rather than "line" to translate *bayt*, because for all Arabic metres except *rajaz* the English translation of a *bayt* usually takes two lines.

Transliteration and Dates

The transliteration system of the third edition of *The Encyclopaedia of Islam* has been used, with the following changes:

- The pausal feminine ending is the prosodically more correct *-ah*, not *-a*.
- Compound personal names with Allāh are written as two words, as in Arabic orthography (ʿAbd Allāh, ʿUbayd Allāh), not as one word (ʿAbdallāh, ʿUbaydallāh).
- An apostrophe is used to distinguish a combination of two consonants (as in *Mud'hish*, *ghālat'humū*) from a digraph (e.g., *adhān*, *thalāthah*).
- Full transliteration is given for poetic and Qur'anic passages; for prose quotations pausal forms are generally used, but verbal endings and the accusative ending *-an* are usually given.
- In poetry, vowels in rhyme position are transliterated as long, in accordance with the rules of prosody, even when written short.

Islamic (Hijri, AH) and Christian (AD) dates are given, separated by a slash.[1]

1 Instead of the traditional AD, CE ("Common Era") is now often used to avoid explicit reference to Christianity. I see no reason for doing this. It is, after all, based on Christian reckoning, just as AH is based on the Islamic calendar.

Names

A full Arabic name may consist of (1) a proper, given name (*ism*) such as Aḥmad, Ibrāhīm, ʿAbd Allāh, followed by (2) one or more forefathers (*nasab*), each preceded by *ibn* ("son of") or *ibnat/bint* ("daughter of"). Exceptionally, *ibn* is followed by a mother's name (e.g. Ibn Mayyādah). Except in the index I have not abbreviated "ibn" as "b.", which is often done but may have contributed to the unfortunate rise in scholarly works of "bin", a solecism in Classical Arabic ("bin" should be restricted to some modern names). Many names include (3) a *nisbah*, a form ending in *-ī* and derived from a tribe or clan (al-Qurashī, from Quraysh, al-Yazīdī, from a forefather called Yazīd), or from a place (al-Baghdādī, al-Baṣrī), and (4) a *kunyah* (teknonym,[1] usually referring to a child, usually a son, rarely a daughter), preceded by Abū ("father of") or Umm ("mother of"). A *kunyah* often appears before the *ism*. Many persons also have (5) a nickname (*laqab*), which could have any form (al-Najjār, "the Carpenter", al-Muwaswis, "the madman, the delusional one") but, confusingly, is often a form with Abū (Abū Nuwās, "the one with the dangling hairlock"). Conventionally, the common name Abū Bakr counts as an *ism*, not as a *kunyah*.

It is unpredictable by which part of the name one is most often called. A man may be known as Ibn So-and-so, mentioning a father (as in the case of Ibn al-Muʿtazz) or an ancestor instead of the father (e.g. Ibn Harmah, Ibn Qutaybah). The famous poet Abū Tammām is sometimes called Ḥabīb (his *ism*) or al-Ṭāʾī (after his tribe, Ṭayyiʾ); the poet Muslim ibn al-Walīd is often called by his nickname, Ṣarīʿ al-Ghawānī ("Slain-by-the-Fair"). An Abbasid caliph also has a regnal name, e.g. al-Manṣūr, whose *ism* is ʿAbd Allāh but who is very often called by his *kunyah*, Abū Jaʿfar. A full regnal name usually refers to God, sometimes explicitly, as in al-Mutawakkil ʿalā llāh ("He who relies on God") or al-Muʿtazz bi-llāh ("He who is strengthened by God"), but such names are normally shortened (al-Mutawakkil, al-Muʿtazz). A caliph is usually addressed as *Amīr al-Muʾminīn*, "Commander of the Believers". I have not been consistent in translating nicknames or professions: Maḥmūd al-Warrāq, Mānī l-Majnūn rather than Maḥmūd the Bookseller, Mānī the Madman.

Many Arabists omit the article al- in names, even when it is an integral part, a deplorable habit (perhaps partly inspired by laziness, partly by Persians, for whom ʿUmar al-Khayyām is ʿUmar Khayyām). It is true that instead of al-

1 Not "patronymic" as in *EI2*, v, 395, "kunya" (A.J. Wensinck).

Ḥasan and al-ʿAbbās one sometimes finds Ḥasan and ʿAbbās; but these are rare exceptions. Al-Jāḥiẓ, al-Maʾmūn, al-Iṣfahānī must always have their article.[2] In shortened book titles in references, however, the article has been omitted (al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, etc.).

2 Likewise, in Dutch surnames "van" must never be dropped (as is often done, as I know from experience).

Introduction

1 ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Muʿtazz: Death and Life

December AD 908 in Baghdad (Rabīʿ al-awwal 296 AH) was a month to remember. On Saturday, 24 December snow fell, covering the roofs with four inches of snow.[1] Only a few days earlier a coup and a counter-coup had cost the lives of several leading persons, the most prominent one being ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Muʿtazz (very often shortened as Ibn al-Muʿtazz), the most brilliant poet alive at the time, a proficient prose writer, and a literary critic who wrote a treatise on tropes and figures of speech, a seminal work in the history of Arabic poetics and literary criticism. He was, moreover, an Abbasid prince, son of Caliph al-Muʿtazz. A few months before, in August 908 (Dhū l-Qaʿdah, 295) Jaʿfar al-Muqtadir, a grand-nephew of his, had been made Caliph. He was a mere thirteen years old, which was perhaps better than the Byzantine Emperor Constantine VII, who had been crowned the same year, a toddler of three years old. Al-Muqtadir, however, was a bad choice according to some leading figures. They had preferred ʿAbd Allāh, who was not only older, at forty-seven, but also noted for his intelligence and brilliance in many fields. He is, moreover, described as good-looking and amiable. What more could one wish for, when looking for a suitable candidate for the caliphate?

On the fateful day of 17 December 908 (20 Rabīʿ I, 296) some of prince ʿAbd Allāh's supporters acted on this and organised a coup, persuading him to reign as Caliph. He consented, on condition that no blood should be spilled. Al-Muqtadir was deposed, some blood *was* spilled (al-Muqtadir's vizier was killed), and ʿAbd Allāh took the regnal name as al-Muntaṣif bi-llāh (or, in some sources, al-Murtaḍī bi-llāh, or al-Ghālib bi-llāh, or al-Rāḍī bi-llāh),[2] but this name will be sought in vain in most lists of Abbasid caliphs. The anthologist al-Thaʿālibī (d. 329/1039), in his useful book *Thimār al-qulūb*, on common phrases and expressions, has an entry *Khilāfat Ibn al-Muʿtazz*, "Ibn al-Muʿtazz's caliphate", which, he says, is a proverbial phrase for something of short duration.[3] And short it was, for Ibn al-Muʿtazz became a "one-day Caliph": a counter-coup ended his reign the next day and reinstated young al-Muqtadir, whose subsequent reign (296–320/908–932) turned out to be as bad as wise people

1 Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, III, iv, 2283; ʿArīb, *Ṣilat Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, 30; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntaẓam*, xiii, 81.
2 Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, ii, 76.
3 Al-Thaʿālibī, *Thimār al-qulūb*, 191–194.

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had predicted. The leading supporters of Ibn al-Muʿtazz were rounded up and killed; he himself went into hiding in the house of a very rich merchant called Ibn al-Jaṣṣāṣ, but he was apprehended and killed soon afterwards.[4] One of the other victims was Muḥammad ibn Dāwūd ibn al-Jarrāḥ, a secretary of state who had been one of the principal initiators of the coup and who was Ibn al-Muʿtazz's vizier for a day; he was also, like Ibn al-Muʿtazz, the author of books on poetry and poets, among them the partly preserved book on modern poets, *al-Waraqah*.[5] A list of caliphs in which Ibn al-Muʿtazz does appear is that by al-Damīrī (d. 808/1405) in his very long digression on caliphal history in his animal encyclopaedia.[6] This is because it fits in with a perceived pattern: every sixth incumbent of the caliphate was deposed.[7] The historian and religious scholar al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923) is reported to have written: "Nothing has ever been seen more remarkable than the affair of Ibn al-Muʿtazz and al-Muqtadir, for both the inner circle of notables and the common people (that is, everybody) had agreed to prefer Ibn al-Muʿtazz and accept him and to depose al-Muqtadir because of his youth (…)."[8] It is widely believed that a poem by a contemporary poet, Ibn

4 Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vi, 443 says, *ʿuṣirat khuṣyatāhu ḥattā māt*, "his testicles were crushed until he died", a gruesome detail not found in older sources and, I hope, not true (perhaps there is a confusion with the fate of Caliph al-Muhtadī in 269/870, see al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, III, iii, 1817, Ibn al-ʿImrānī, *Inbāʾ*, 136); but his end was unpleasant (cf. Ibn al-ʿImrānī, *Inbāʾ*, 156, quoting al-Ṣūlī: *shudda ṭarafāhu ḥattā khtanaqa*). For a summary of the accounts of the coup and counter-coup, see Hugh Kennedy, "The Reign of al-Muqtadir", 16–24. The main Arabic sources are Miskawayh, *Tajārib al-umam*, (ed. Amedroz), i, 2–13, (ed. Ḥasan), v, 4–9; and ʿArīb ibn Saʿd al-Qurṭubī, *Ṣilat Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, 24–28; see also e.g. al-Tanūkhī, *Faraj*, iii, 199–201; al-Ṣābī, *Wuzarāʾ*, 130–133 (quoting al-Tanūkhī, see al-Tanūkhī, *Nishwār*, v, 64–68); Ibn al-ʿImrānī, *Inbāʾ*, 154–156; al-Suyūṭī, *Tārīkh al-khulafāʾ*, 440–441. Ibn al-Jaṣṣās, jeweller and financier, "a particularly wily individual" (see *EI2*, iii, 750–751, "Ibn al-Djaṣṣāṣ" [Ch. Pellat]), was able, not for the last time, to save his life with his wealth and his wits.

5 On him see *EI2*, iii, 750, "Ibn al-Djarrāḥ" (D. Sourdel), *GAS*, xvi, 222–223. For a very readable description of life at and around the Baghdad court, and the historical events from the beginning of the Abbasid Dynasty until the death of al-Muhtadī in 255/869 (when Ibn al-Muʿtazz was a young boy), see Kennedy, *The Court of the Caliphs* (which has a chapter on "Poetry and Power at the Early Abbasid Court", 112–129). Ibn al-Muʿtazz is not mentioned in the book, apart from appearing in the Abbasid family tree on p. xv, but his father al-Muʿtazz plays a role in the final chapter, "High Noon in Sāmarrā" (261–296).

6 Al-Damīrī, *Ḥayāt al-ḥayawān*, i, 90.

7 See al-Thaʿālibī, *Latāʾif al-maʿārif*, 87–88: *Qāla l-Ṣūlī: al-nās yarwūna anna kull sādis yaqūmu bi-amr al-dīn mundhu awwal al-Islām lā budd an yukhlaʿ*, tr. Bosworth, 113: "Aṣ-Ṣūlī remarks that people have observed that every sixth person made responsible for the welfare of the Islamic religion has right from its inception inevitably been deposed"; see also Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntaẓam*, xvii, 332 (yr AH 532); Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, ix, 305 (yr AH 532); al-Suyūṭī, *Tārīkh al-khulafāʾ*, 24.

8 Rosenthal's translation in al-Ṭabarī, *The History*, xxxxviii, 190, from ʿArīb, *Ṣilat Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*,

al-ʿAllāf (who has an entry in the book), about the violent death of a beloved cat is really about the untimely demise of Ibn al-Muʿtazz. It is not impossible, but until this can be proved to be true I shall take it to be about a real cat.[9]

Normally, an introduction to a book by an author offers a summary of his life and death. I have reversed the order for dramatic effect. Ibn al-Muʿtazz's unfortunate end was indeed a momentous event, but his life, though generally rather quiet and retired, was by no means humdrum or unimportant, and it began at the onset of a tumultuous time, a period lasting nearly a decade, known as the Samarran Anarchy. In the month of Shawwāl 247 (December 861) Caliph al-Mutawakkil had been murdered by the Turkish military. It was in the following month, on 23 Shaʿbān 247 (1 November 861) that his grandson Ibn al-Muʿtazz (or Abū l-ʿAbbās ʿAbd Allāh ibn Muḥammad al-Muʿtazz bi-llāh ibn Jaʿfar al-Mutawakkil ʿalā llāh ibn Muḥammad al-Muʿtaṣim bi-llāh ibn Hārūn al-Rashīd, to give him a fuller name and genealogy) was born in Samarra (Sāmarrāʾ).[10] This town, now an extensive site of ruins, was officially called, punningly, Surra Man Raʾā ("Pleased are Those who See [Her]"). Lying c. 125 km north of Baghdad on the Tigris, it served as the newly built capital of the empire and the residence of caliphs between 221/836 and 279/892. It was founded after tensions and disturbances between the population of Baghdad and the Caliphal guard consisting of non-Arabs, usually called Turks.

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28. As Rosenthal goes on to say, the remark is not found in al-Ṭabarī's *Tārīkh* and it is also untypical of him since he rarely reflects on contemporary events in this manner.

9 See my note at § 86.

10 General sources on ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Muʿtazz are al-Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, ii, 615, 617 (tr. *The Works*, 1285, 1286); al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, iii, iv, 2281–2283 (tr. *The History*, xxxviii, 189–190 [Franz Rosenthal]); al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, i, 282; iv, 115, v, 108, 193, 194–196, 250; Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, iv, 195, v, 127; al-Ṣūlī, *Awrāq*, iii (*Ashʿār awlād al-khulafāʾ*), 107–296; Abū l-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī, *Aghānī*, x, 274–286 and see index ed. Guidi 446–447; Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, (ed. Ayman Fuʾād Sayyid) i, 359–360, (ed. Flügel) 116; al-Ṣābiʾ, *al-Wuzarāʾ*, see index (p. 426); ʿArīb ibn Saʿd al-Qurṭubī, *Ṣilat Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī* (ed. De Goeje), 24–28; Ibn al-ʿImrānī, *al-Inbāʾ fī tārīkh al-khulafāʾ*, 153–156; Miskawayh, *Tajārib al-umam / The Eclipse*, i, 5–9; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Madīnat al-Salām*, xi, 302–308 (no. 5170); Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntaẓam* (yr 296/908), xiii, 79–81, 84–90; Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vi, 441–443; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, iii, 76–80; Ibn al-Anbārī, *Nuzhat al-alibbāʾ*, 176–177; Ibn Shākir, *Fawāt*, ii, 239–246; al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, xxii, 23–27, 186–189; al-Damīrī, *Ḥayāt al-ḥayawān*, i, 90–91; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xvii, 447–467; Ibn al-ʿImād, *Shadharāt al-dhahab*, iii, 405–409. The main modern sources in western languages are Loth, *Über Leben und Werke des ʿAbdallah ibn ul Muʿtazz*; Brockelmann, *GAL*, i, 80–81 [79–80], *GAL Suppl.*, i, 128–130; *EI2*, iii, 892–893, "Ibn al-Muʿtazz" (B. Lewin); *EAL*, 354–355 (R. Jacobi); Heinrichs, "Ibn al-Muʿtazz"; Sezgin, *GAS*, ii, 64, 100, 105, 439, 569–571 (addenda in ix, 302, xvi, 49); xvi, 40–49, 223; xvii, 116–117; Bray, "Ibn al-Muʿtazz and Politics" (on his *fuṣūl qiṣār*, "aphorisms"). A good introduction to Ibn al-Muʿtazz is also that by James Montgomery, *In Deadly Embrace*, xiv–xxii.

The young prince was a mere seven years old when his father, by then reigning as Caliph al-Muʿtazz since 252/866, was forced to abdicate and killed soon afterwards (again by the Turkish soldiers), in 255/869, only 24 years old. Virtually nothing is known about his mother, who is said to have been an *umm walad* (a concubine who has a child by her master) called Khāyin,[11] and it seems that the boy was raised by his grandmother, Qabīḥah (d. 264/877), the favourite concubine, a Byzantine, of al-Mutawakkil.[12] Prince ʿAbd Allāh was educated and taught by famous scholars such as al-Mubarrad (d. 286/899 or 900) and Thaʿlab (d. 291/904), both of whom were leading philologists, grammarians, and connoisseurs of poetry. In a poem that the young prince composed when he was thirteen he addresses and thanks one of his tutors, Aḥmad ibn Saʿīd al-Dimashqī (d. 306/919); in this poem he mentions other famous earlier philologists, such as al-Kisāʾī (d. 189/805) and al-Khalīl ibn Aḥmad (d. 175/791, lexicographer and grammarian, who also laid the foundations of the science of poetic metre), and he boasts of his own poetic prowess ("In my mouth is a cutting sword such as no one has ever unsheathed …").[13] He devoted his life to poetry and literary prose, and judging by the quantity of poems on hunting and wine he must have enjoyed some pleasures of courtly life. When Caliph al-Muʿtaḍid, a first cousin of his, decided to move the caliphal residence back to Baghdad in 279/892, Ibn al-Muʿtazz also returned, even though he liked Samarra much better.[14] He composed a long poem in *rajaz* couplets, in paired rhyme (*aabbccdd* …), celebrating the life and exploits of al-Muʿtaḍid.[15] After

11 Al-Quḍāʿī, *ʿUyūn al-maʿārif*, 493.

12 Khāyin (or Khāʾin) means "Traitor", Qabīḥah means "Ugly". Both names are clearly apotropaic rather than descriptive. There is a report that Qabīḥah was sent to Mecca shortly after the death of her son al-Muʿtazz, having refused to pay 50,000 dinars in exchange for his life (she was discovered to own 1,300,000 dinars). If this report is true her education of Ibn al-Muʿtazz ended already in 255/869. See al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xxiv, 286–287 and al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, III, iii, 1718–1720 (where banishment to Mecca is not mentioned).

13 Al-Marzubānī, *Nūr al-qabas*, 340–341; Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, iii, 47–48; al-Qifṭī, *Inbāh*, i, 80; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, vi, 388–389. The poem is not found in the editions of his *Dīwān* I have consulted.

14 See his poem with invective on Baghdad and praise of Samarra, *Dīwān* (ed. al-Sāmarrāʾī), i, 676–679, (ed. Sharīf), ii, 451–452, al-Ṣūlī, *Awrāq*, iii, 137–138, and his elegiac epigram on Samarra after it had fallen to ruin, *Dīwān* (ed. al-Sāmarrāʾī), ii, 642–643, (ed. Sharīf), ii, 204.

15 Ibn al-Muʿtazz, *Dīwān* (ed. al-Sāmarrāʾī), i, 519–591, *Dīwān* (ed. Sharīf), ii, 5–29 (428 couplets, including some couplets added after the Caliph's death); see Lang, "Muʿtaḍid als Prinz und Regent" (text, translation, and annotation). For a summary of its contents see Margoliouth, *Lectures*, 65–72 (who calls it "nearly as instructive" as al-Ṭabarī's *History*); also Rosenthal, *A History of Muslim Historiography*, 182–183. He composed many shorter panegyrics on al-Muʿtaḍid (who by all accounts was a thoroughly unpleasant character,

al-Muʿtaḍid's death in 289/902 he was briefly detained, to ensure the smooth succession of al-Muʿtaḍid's son al-Muktafī: an indication that Ibn al-Muʿtazz was already thought to be a serious contender for the caliphate.[16] Even during al-Muʿtaḍid's reign, having incurred the Caliph's displeasure and suspicion, he was imprisoned for a while. He was released after vizier ʿUbayd Allāh ibn Sulaymān ibn Wahb had assured the Caliph that "'Abd Allāh ibn al-Muʿtazz has no ambition to be caliph; his only concerns are composing poetry and writing books."[17]

Very little is known about his family life. His *kunyah*, Abū l-ʿAbbās, hints at a son but no wife, sons, or daughters are mentioned and since a *kunyah* is sometimes given to a child, as a kind of proleptic, wishful naming, no son called al-ʿAbbās may have existed. An epigram by him of four verses is said to be an elegy on a daughter (*qāla yarthī bnatahū*),[18] but in another redaction it is a *jāriyah* ("young girl, slave girl, or concubine") instead of a daughter.[19] At his death he left no offspring.[20] His *Dīwān* (collected verse) contains many amorous and erotic poems describing lovers' meetings, with female and male partners, but it is unknown how much of this is merely poetic convention. The Andalusian scholar Ibn Ḥazm (d. 456/1064), in his book on genealogy, even says (on whose authority I do not know) that Ibn al-Muʿtazz was impotent (*ḥaṣūr*) and was never intimate with a woman (*lam yaqrab imraʾatan qaṭṭ*).[21] In his many love poems he mentions a female beloved called Shirr (or Shirrah, or Shurayrah, depending on metre and rhyme) more than thirty times, with some erotic passages.[22] It is not clear to me why Muḥammad Badīʿ Sharīf, in the introduction to his edition of Ibn al-Muʿtazz's poetry, claims that Shirr was not a person of flesh and blood but a symbol (of what he does not say).[23] Ibn Ḥazm, interested in genealogy and offspring, does not say anything about intercourse with boys, who are ubiquitous in Abbasid amorous and erotic poetry. One of Ibn al-

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a specialist in inventing novel kinds of cruel executions, see e.g. al-Tanūkhī, *Nishwār*, i, 144–146, 151–155).

16 Al-Tanūkhī, *Faraj*, ii, 9–10; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, xi, 305; Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, vi, 411.

17 Ibn al-ʿImrānī, *Inbāʾ*, 146.

18 Ibn al-Muʿtazz, *Dīwān* (ed. Sharīf), ii, 343–344.

19 Ibn al-Muʿtazz, *Dīwān* (ed. Lewin), iv, 148, note, (ed. al-Sāmarrāʾī), iii, 48, note.

20 *Aghānī*, x, 275.

21 Ibn Ḥazm, *Jamharat ansāb al-ʿArab*, 28.

22 For instance, "I said, 'Come, Shurayrah, let us mingle | just as water and wine are mixed in equal parts!' || Then we spent the night, suckled with saliva sweet to drink, | as two captives in embrace, knotted together." (*Dīwān*, i, 429).

23 Ibn al-Muʿtazz, *Dīwān* (ed. Sharīf), i, 204: "*laysat fatātan tamshī ʿalā rijlayn wa-innamā hiya ramz*."

Muʿtazz's most often quoted love lyrics is about an encounter with an attractive and acquiescent Christian boy and it contains the famous verse, "Then there happened what happened. I shall not mention it; | so think the best of it and do not ask about it".[24] This does not mean, of course, that this and other erotic verses are necessarily about real encounters. And he is right, we should not ask about it.

2 Ibn al-Muʿtazz the Poet

Ibn al-Muʿtazz was—unlike many poets in the present book, his *Ṭabaqāt al-shuʿarāʾ al-muḥdathīn*—a major poet whose poems, especially his descriptive pieces (*awṣāf*) and striking comparisons (*tashbīhāt*), are very often quoted in mediaeval anthologies.[25] His poetry was collected and thematically arranged by a younger contemporary, his good friend Abū Bakr al-Ṣūlī (d. 335/947), a courtier, memoirist, mediocre poet, and legendary chess master.[26] Ibn al-Muʿtazz composed poems in many genres. In addition to his numerous descriptive and witty epigrams (*awṣāf* and *mulaḥ*) his *Dīwān* (collected verse) contains vaunting poetry (*fakhr*), panegyric (*madīḥ*), congratulatory poems (*tahānī*), elegy (*rithāʾ*), poems of reproach (*muʿātabāt*), poems on worldly wisdom and

24 Ibn al-Muʿtazz, *Dīwān* (ed. Lewin), iii, 50, (ed. al-Sāmarrāʾī), ii, 111; a version of the poem is in ed. Sharīf, ii, 250–251 but it does not have the quoted verse. See also e.g. al-Thaʿālibī, *Nihāyah*, 77; Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-buldān* s.v. Dayr ʿAbdūn; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, iii, 78. On the poem, see Jacobi, "Ibn al-Muʿtazz: Dair ʿAbdūn, a Structural Analysis" and Rundgren, "The Poem 'Dayr ʿAbdūn' by Ibn al-Muʿtazz". The verse is given a mystical twist by al-Ghazālī (*Munqidh*, 133) and other Sufis. Ibn al-Ṭiqṭaqā (fl. 701/1302) quotes it, anonymously (with *fa-ẓunna ẓannan*, "think about it!", instead of *fa-zunna khayran*), in his popular mirror for princes and historical compendium *al-Fakhrī* (336), when relating the violent end of the Abbasid Dynasty and the killing of the last caliph in 656/1258, events the author finds too gruesome to describe explicitly in detail. For similar verses by Rabīʿah al-Raqqī and al-Ḥusayn ibn al-Ḍaḥḥāk, quoted by Ibn al-Muʿtazz in his *Ṭabaqāt*, see below, pp. 244 and 390.

25 For some statistics, see Wagner, *Abū Nuwās*, 450–452: in terms of verses quoted, Ibn al-Muʿtazz comes second, after Ibn al-Rūmī but before al-Buḥturī, Abū Nuwās and Abū Tammām, in Ibn Abī ʿAwn's book on poetic comparisons, *al-Tashbīhāt*; in Abū Hilāl al-ʿAskarī's *Dīwān al-maʿānī* he again comes second after Ibn al-Rūmī; in al-Ḥuṣrī's *Zahr al-ādāb* he is third, after Ibn al-Rūmī and Abū Tammām; in ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī's *Asrār al-balāghah* (a supremely important work on poetry, especially imagery) he is first, well ahead of al-Buḥturī, al-Mutanabbī, Ibn al-Rūmī, and others.

26 On him see *EI2*, ix, 846–848 (S. Leder), Osti, *History and Memory*. The *Dīwān* was also collected and redacted by other well-known literati such as Ibn Abī ʿAwn (d. 322/934) and Ḥamzah al-Iṣfahānī (d. c. 360/970).

renunciation (*ḥikmah* and *zuhd*), and invective poems and lampoons (*hijāʾ*). He is, moreover, an important poet of Bacchic poetry (*khamr* or *sharāb*),[27] love poetry (*ghazal*, in both flavours: *muʾannath*, on women, and *mudhakkar*, on boys), and hunting poetry (*ṭard*). Although he composed numerous odes of some length (many of them on caliphs and viziers), he is especially good at epigrams of two or a few more verses.[28] There are several modern editions of his *Dīwān*.[29] There are not many translations into English of poems by him, but mention should be made of the hunting poems, translated by James Montgomery.[30]

3 Ibn al-Muʿtazz the Literary Critic

Although the literary criticism in his *Ṭabaqāt* may seem unimpressive (see below), Ibn al-Muʿtazz is a key figure in the history of Arabic literary criticism and poetics. He wrote a short but extremely influential work on tropes and figures of speech, *Kitāb al-Badīʿ*, *The Book of the Novel Style*.[31] The word

27 Numerous short poems and another long poem in *rajaz* couplets, a condemnation of drinking wine in the morning (*fī dhamm al-ṣabūḥ*), see al-Ṣūlī, *Awrāq*, iii, 251–258, Ibn al-Muʿtazz, *Dīwān* (ed. al-Sāmarrāʾī), ii, 536–559, (ed. Sharīf), ii, 30–37, ed. Lewin, iv, 72–79; the only translation of this poem known to me is the Dutch one in Bouazza, *Schoon in elk oog*, 279–287.

28 See for instance Papoutsakis, "Ibn al-Muʿtazz the Epigrammatist".

29 I do not know if anyone has counted the extant verses, but I think they must be in excess of 10,000. I have used the editions by Bernard Lewin (which is incomplete), by Muḥammad Badīʿ Sharīf (which is bowdlerized), by Yūnus Aḥmad al-Sāmarrāʾī (the best edition available to me), and an uncritical popular edition, also bowdlerized, by Dār Ṣādir (for details see the Bibliography).

30 Ibn al-Muʿtazz, *In Deadly Embrace: Arabic Hunting Poems* by ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Muʿtazz, ed. & tr. by James E. Montgomery. On the hunting poetry see also J. Stetkevych, *The Hunt in Arabic Poetry*, 139–183. Epigrams, mostly very short, are found in a slim volume by W.B.H. Wightman and A.Y. al-Udhari, *Birds Through a Ceiling of Alabaster: Three Abbasid Poets*, 67–96. This collection transforms Ibn al-Muʿtazz into a modern English poet; it lacks references to the sources. Those who can read Dutch may resort to Hafid Bouazza's translations, in idiosyncratic Dutch studded with obsolete words, of a very substantial portion of Ibn al-Muʿtazz's poetry in *Schoon in elk oog is wat het bemint*, 36–39, 131–297, 457, 463, 545–546, 631–653, 720, 751; poems on love, sex, and wine prevail. For a German study of his nature poetry, with translations, see Schoeler, *Arabische Naturdichtung*, 235–272.

31 The first critical edition was made by Ignaz Kratchkovsky in 1935, who also devoted several studies to the treatise, followed by many others including S.A. Bonebakker ("Ibn al-Muʿtazz and the Badīʿ", "Ibn al-Muʿtazz and *Kitāb al-Badīʿ*", "Reflections on the *Kitāb al-Badīʿ*"). A new edition, with an English translation, by Huda Fakhreddine is in prepara-

badīʿ means "original, novel", and it was loosely applied to characteristics of the "modern" style: a more frequent and conscious use of tropes and figures of speech, above all metaphor (*istiʿārah*), but also simile (*tashbīh*), antithesis (*ṭibāq* or *muṭābaqah*), paronomasia (*tajnīs* or *jināS*), hyperbole (*mubālaghah*, *ighrāq*, *ghuluww*), theology-inspired argumentation (*al-madhhab al-kalāmī*), etc. In his treatise the author wants to show that earlier texts, including the Qur'an and Hadith, also employed such figures, but in moderation, whereas the "modern poets", notably Abū Tammām (d. c. 232/845 or 846), sometimes went too far. In subsequent ages many books on tropes and figures of speech were written, with many kinds being added or subtly subdivided; in all these works many of Ibn al-Muʿtazz's examples and definitions reappear. He also wrote an epistle on the good and bad qualities of Abū Tammām's poetry, *Risālah fī maḥāsin shiʿr Abī Tammām wa-masāwīh*.[32] A book on literary plagiarism and borrowing (*al-Sariqāt*) has not been preserved.

4 Ibn al-Muʿtazz as a Writer of Prose

Abū Bakr al-Ṣūlī, as mentioned above, was close to Ibn al-Muʿtazz and admired him. In the long section about him in his *al-Awrāq* (*The Folios*), in the volume entitled *Ashʿār awlād of khulafāʾ wa-akhbāruhum* (*The Poems by Sons of Caliphs and their Reports*), he describes him as being proficient in verse and prose.[33] As Ibn al-Muʿtazz himself points out twice in his *Ṭabaqāt*, speaking about others (but perhaps also thinking of himself): "This is rarely combined in one person, for the poetry of prose writers is very feeble, just as the prose writing of poets is very feeble".[34] With prose (*nathr*), literary prose is meant, and Ibn al-Muʿtazz's aphorisms and maxims (*fuṣūl qiṣār*, *ādāb*) are often quoted. Some epistles (*rasāʾil*) are preserved, as is an interesting anthology of wine poetry, *Fuṣūl al-tamāthīl fī tabāshīr al-surūr* (*Passages with Images on Harbingers of Joy*), which also deals with general aspects of wine, its production, storage, the etiquette of drinking, its medical properties, and its legality or prohibition. Preserved

tion as a volume in the Library of Arabic Literature series. His teacher Thaʿlab also wrote a (far less influential) treatise on poetics, *Qawāʿid al-shiʿr* (*The Foundations of Poetry*), in which some figures of speech are briefly discussed. Unlike Ibn al-Muʿtazz, he does not quote "modern" poets, apart from one verse by ʿAlī ibn Jabalah (*Qawāʿid*, 53).

32 Quoted in al-Marzubānī, *Muwashshaḥ*, 470–490, also in *Rasāʾil Ibn al-Muʿtazz fī l-naqd wa-l-adab wa-l-balāghah*, comp. by Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Munʿim Khafājī, 19–31.

33 Al-Ṣūlī, *Awrāq*, iii, 107.

34 *Ṭabaqāt*, p. 590, cf. 379.

is also a very short work listing words meaning, or referring to, wine, *Asmāʾ al-khamr*, dubiously attributed to him.[35] Book lists in many premodern bio-bibliographical works that have an entry on him mention several other works that have not been preserved. Abū l-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī (d. c. 362/972) writes that he was knowledgeable about the art of music and melodies (*ṣināʿat al-mūsīqī wa-l-kalām ʿalā l-nagham wa-ʿilalihā*) and that he wrote well-known books about it and other subjects.[36] Others mention titles that sound like anthologies: *al-Zahr wa-l-riyāḍ* (*Flowers and Meadows*), *al-Jawāriḥ wa-l-ṣayd* (*Predators and Game*), *Ḥulā l-akhbār* (*Jewels of Reports*), *Ashʿār al-mulūk* (*Poems of Princes*).

The present book is also an anthology, of poetry by and anecdotes about poets. Its modern editor, ʿAbd al-Sattār Aḥmad Farrāj, enthusiastically opens his introduction: "*Ṭabaqāt al-shuʿarāʾ* by Ibn al-Muʿtazz is the most important book (*ahamm kitāb*) found in our brilliant literary heritage."[37] This, even to me, sounds like *mubālaghah*, exaggeration, or *ifrāṭ*, excessive hyperbole, but I agree with him that, with its rich offering of poetry (some 4,750 verses, by my reckoning, in many genres and often not found elsewhere, by poets famous and wholly obscure) and with its many anecdotes, it is a wonderful book ("of supreme interest")[38] that offers insight in early Abbasid culture high and low, and which ought to be available in a translation.

5 *Ṭabaqāt al-shuʿarāʾ al-muḥdathīn* (*The Modern Poets*)

5.1 Ṭabaqāt

The first word of the Arabic title, *Ṭabaqāt*, is not in my translation of the title, because the usual translation, "Classes", would be misleading in this case. There are many works, both predating Ibn al-Muʿtazz and after him, that are true *Ṭabaqāt*, books dealing with "classes", or categories of people: of "Companions" of the Prophet Muḥammad, of grammarians, of physicians, of Shāfiʿī legal

35 Weipert, "*Asmāʾ al-khamr*. Collections of Synonyms Attributed to Ibn al-Muʿtazz" (I thank Professor Weipert for sending me a copy of his article).

36 Al-Iṣfahānī, *Aghānī*, x, 276; al-Iṣfahānī, in his chapter on the famous singer Shāriyah (mid-3rd/9th century), also says that he used a book about her by Ibn al-Muʿtazz (*Aghānī*, xvi, 4, 8–9, 10–11). Ibn al-Muʿtazz composed the music for some of his own verses (*Aghānī*, x, 277) or for verses by others (*Aghānī*, x, 278–279).

37 Ibn al-Muʿtazz, *Ṭabaqāt*, 5: "*Ṭabaqāt Ibn al-Muʿtazz ahamm kitāb wujida min turāthinā l-adabī l-rāʾiʿ*".

38 J.H.D. (J. Heyworth-Dunne) in his review of Eghbal's facsimile edition, *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 10:2 (1940), 518.

scholars, and many more.[39] A predecessor on poets is *Ṭabaqāt fuḥūl al-shuʿarāʾ* (*Classes of the Master Poets*) by Ibn Sallām al-Jumaḥī (d. 231/846–847), who restricts himself to pre- and early Islamic poets, who are arranged in *ṭabaqāt*, "classes", somewhat erratically, according to criteria that combine chronology (*Jāhiliyyah* or *Islām*), geography (towns such as Medina, Mecca), ethnicity (there is a *ṭabaqah* on Jewish poets), and form (another *ṭabaqah* deals with *rajaz* poets).[40]

Ibn al-Muʿtazz uses the word *ṭabaqah* in a loose sense a few times in his book,[41] but he does not subdivide his poets into "classes" or chapters. It would follow then that *Ṭabaqāt* is in fact a misnomer because there is no classification, no ranking, no hierarchy, but only listing, with some associative grouping ("mad poets", "poets pretending to be fools", "women poets"), and vestigial chronology in opening with Ibn Harmah (found only in the *Mukhtaṣar*, on which see below), "the rear guard of the ancients and the vanguard of the moderns" and Bashshār, "father of the moderns", while contemporaries of Ibn al-Muʿtazz are generally found towards the end. I have therefore translated the book's title simply as *The Modern Poets*. As Shawkat Toorawa writes, "If there is an underlying raison d'être to Ibn al-Muʿtazz's sequencing, it has so far eluded scholarly analysis".[42]

Although in modern studies the book is usually listed under "biographies", this too is misleading, for it does not offer proper biographies in the accepted sense of the word. It is not a biographical or prosopographical dictionary or encyclopaedia. The book is basically an anthology of poetry, with scattered anecdotes about the lives of the poets, often but not always connected to the quoted poetry. Whereas in modern literary anthologies the anthologised poems are as a rule clearly separated from the contribution of the anthologist, who

39 See, for instance, the indices in *GAS*, xvii, 508–509. On the genre, see Gilliot, "Prosopography in Islam", 24. He mentions "*The Classes of the* [*Modern*] *Poets* written by the prince and poet Ibn al-Muʿtazz (d. 908) contains 127 biographies, most on his contemporaries"—inaccurate, for most poets antedate Ibn al-Muʿtazz's lifetime, and the word "biography" is also misleading, as I argue below. See also Gilliot's entry "Ṭabaḳāt" in *EI2*, x, 7–10 (which does not mention Ibn al-Muʿtazz). On books called *Ṭabaqāt* see further: Hafsi, "Recherches"; al-Qāḍī, "Biographical Dictionaries" (which does not mention Ibn al-Muʿtazz); eadem, "Biographical Dictionairies" (calling Ibn al-Muʿtazz's book a "dictionary", 39, which is wrong or at least confusing, since a dictionary is typically alphabetically arranged).

40 On his criteria see e.g. Kilpatrick, "Criteria of Classification".

41 He mentions "Marwān and those well-known poets in his class" (74); "Abū l-Sawwāq, Abū l-Ghūl, Abū l-Ṣabbārah, and other fools of this class" (508); "Muslim ibn al-Walīd, Abū l-Shīṣ, and others in their class" (524).

42 Toorawa, *Ibn Abī Ṭāhir Ṭayfūr*, 35.

may provide an introduction, or separate introductions to individual poets or individual poems, or annotations, in the present book the poems are integrated with Ibn al-Muʿtazz's introductions and comments. In proper premodern Arabic biographical encyclopaedias there is usually a kind of framework for every single biography. Letizia Osti sketches such a framework, listing the following items (I have shortened her descriptions here):[43] (1) name, lineage, affiliations tribal, scholarly, religious, professional; (2) presentation, summarizing evaluation; (3) date, place and circumstances of birth, places or residence; (4) scholarly/professional relations (teachers, students, employers, patrons); (5) character, physical traits; (6) date, place, and circumstances of death, place of burial; (7) sample and evaluation of poetry; (8) list of books with description and evaluation.

Ṭabaqāt al-shuʿarāʾ al-muḥdathīn offers a varying set of these items for entries on poets. Since most poets did not write books, no. 8 is almost wholly absent,[44] but the other items may be present, erratically. Often no biographical information is given at all. Since the book is above all an anthology, no. 7 is the dominant element of almost all entries, although anecdotes relating to any of the other items may take up considerable space. Most anecdotes are introduced with an *isnād*, mentioning one or a series of informants, beginning with *ḥaddathanī*, "(So-and-so) told me". As is always the case with anecdotes, one cannot be certain of their historicity, and some may well have been made up or embellished for the sake of entertainment.

The poetry is often introduced formulaically, e.g. *wa-mimmā yustaḥsanu lahū*, *wa-mimmā yukhtāru lahū*, *wa-mimmā sāra lahū fī l-dunyā*, and many variants. Often only parts of a longer poem are quoted, with omissions rarely indicated, apart from comments such as *wa-hiya ṭawīlah*, "it is a long poem". Very often Ibn al-Muʿtazz stresses that he is reluctant to make his book overlong.[45] In many cases the transmission of the poems seems confused, judging by comparison with parallels. When he quotes longer parts of a poem, the order of the verses sometimes differs wildly from that in other sources. The attribution of the poems also turns out to be confused in many cases. Although there are many references to writing and to letters, Ibn al-Muʿtazz seems to have relied mostly on oral sources and his memory, rather than on written sources;

43 Osti, *History and Memory*, 13.

44 Al-Khalīl ibn Aḥmad (§ 14), a scholar more than a poet, is an exception. Ibn al-Muʿtazz also refers to al-Jāḥiẓ's book on bodily defects in § 22, on the lame poet Abū l-Khaṭṭāb al-Bahdalī.

45 See the (spurious) introduction and pp. 48, 53, 59, 66, 74, 81, 118, 125, 135, 139, 214, 284, 323, 346, 403, 408, 413.

he never says that he copied something from a book. He often uses the formula *wa-mimmā rawaynā lahū*, literally "among what we have transmitted as his", which I have rendered e.g. as "among the poetry by him that we have memorized"; or perhaps one should read it as *wa-mimmā ruwwīnā lahū* ("among what we have been made to transmit as his"). He does quote two letters (see §§ 87 and 126) and one imagines that he made notes during the compilation of his book. Many of his almost countless informants have not been identified; their names are often too brief or too common to make an identification possible ("Abū Ghānim", "ʿAlī ibn Isḥāq") and notes about them will be given only when such an informant is well known, for instance his teacher al-Mubarrad ("Muḥammad ibn Yazīd" or "Abū l-ʿAbbās al-Mubarrad").

Although he was a fine critic in his *al-Badīʿ* and some extant epistles, his critical remarks in the *Ṭabaqāt* are almost always perfunctory, general, and superficial. This is perhaps the most disappointing characteristic of the book: the author seems to have made a point of excluding almost all negative comments on poems. The reader should not expect something on the lines of, for instance, Samuel Johnson's *Lives of the English Poets*, with its often trenchant criticism and where so-called "metaphysical" poets such as Cowley and Donne are berated for their "abstruse" conceits, "enormous and disgusting hyperboles", and "indelicate and disgusting" verses (one wonders what he would have written if he had known the poetry quoted in Ibn al-Muʿtazz's book). Some anthologists add short evaluative comments on poems, as does, for instance, al-Ṣafadī (d. 764/1363) in his *al-Wāfī bi-l-Wafayāt*: "very fine (*fī ghāyat al-ḥusn*)", "charming (*malīḥ*)", "good (*jayyid*)", "acceptable (*maqbūl*)", "mediocre (*mutawassiṭ*)", "inferior (*nāzil, munḥaṭṭ*)", "extremely bad and inferior (*radhl munḥaṭṭ ilā l-ghāyah*)"; others provide explanatory glosses and interpretations of difficult expressions or obscure allusions. Ibn al-Muʿtazz's book is almost devoid of such comments, even though he was taught by some famous teachers, such as al-Mubarrad and Thaʿlab, who were leading grammarians and philologists. An exception is the passage where he quotes al-Mubarrad's explanations on a long invective poem by Abū Nuwās (in § 33), which is studded with allusions to historical and legendary persons or events.

One must concede that an anthologist need not be a critic or a scholar. Many of the listed poets are called proficient, excellent, well-known, etc. This is particularly striking in the rather short section on Abū Tammām (§ 51), where Ibn al-Muʿtazz says (as he does of many poets), "all his poetry is good", although he criticises many verses by him in his *al-Badīʿ* and in his epistle on Abū Tammām quoted in al-Marzubānī's *Muwashshaḥ*.[46] Biographical details are given unsys-

46 One critical remark is found, however: on p. 336 Abū Tammām is said to have overstepped the bounds with his use of *badīʿ*.

tematically; very few dates are provided; death dates are given at the end of entries in a handful of cases and they may have been added by a copyist, as the editor, ʿAbd al-Sattār Aḥmad Farrāj, suggests.

Disappointing, too, is the lack of personal experiences. Ibn al-Muʿtazz as a person is almost wholly absent in the many reports and accounts, even though he would potentially have been a great source of anecdotes and inside information on the court and circles of scholars, literati, and civil servants. Although he must have had personal contacts with at least some of the poets in the *Ṭabaqāt*, he does not mention this.[47] All his anecdotes are related to him by others. Al-Buḥturī composed panegyric poems on him and his father al-Muʿtazz (see the note in al-Buḥturī's entry, §107), so he must have met the poet, but the entry on him is silent on this, whereas he could have quoted part of a poem by al-Buḥturī in which he praises him as a man and a poet, even referring to two of the five figures of speech (*tajnīs*, paronomasia, and *muṭābaqah*, antithesis) that form the core of Ibn al-Muʿtazz's treatise *al-Badīʿ*:[48]

> Abū l-ʿAbbās! You excel among your kin
> in erudition and character (*ādāban wa-akhlāqan*).
> If you were shaped in non-human form,
> you would be made of pure gold.
> (…)
> You are rain when it pours down, a lion
> when it advances, and a sword when it is brandished.
> In the racecourse of poetry you have gained
> the first prize by right and with distinction,
> With its well-made structures and its original motifs (*ibdāʿ maʿānīhi*),
> never found to be faulty.
> When you use paronomasia (*jannasta*) you avoid awkward diction,
> and if you use antithesis (*ṭābaqta*) you embroider the text.

Altogether, Ibn al-Muʿtazz remains a shadowy figure in his book, largely absent as a person. Unlike some anthologists, ancient or modern, he does not include his own poetry, even though at the time of his death, after the deaths of al-

47 A possible exception is Abū Shurāʿah (§95), whom he says to have met (§95)—unless the speaker is the narrator of the preceding anecdote.

48 Al-Buḥturī, *Dīwān*, (ii,) 1119, a poem of nine verses with the rare rhyme *-ī/ūzā* and an unusual metre, which the editor al-Ṣayrafī identifies as a deviant form of *al-wāfir* but is better described as *al-hazaj* with six feet instead of the usual four (SLLX SLLX SLLX | SLLX SLLX SLLL), which to my knowledge is not found in treatises on metre.

Buḥturī and Ibn al-Rūmī, he was arguably the best and most prominent Arabic poet alive.[49]

As argued above, the term *ṭabaqāt* is a misnomer, yet the book is remarkably inclusive, with poets from many strata of society. Among the poets are Arabs and non-Arabs (mostly Persians); famous poets and obscure poets; rich ones and poor ones; court poets and lower-class poets (Khālid the Carpenter, Yaʿqūb the Date-Seller); men and women; mad or stupid poets and poets better known as scholars (al-Khalīl ibn Aḥmad, al-Naẓẓām, al-Nāshiʾ); poets from Iraq (mostly Baghdad), Syria, the Arabian Peninsula, and Persia;[50] pious and godly poets and disreputable, libertine ones, or heretics; poets with an urban outlook and poets cultivating a Bedouin style (Ibn Mayyādah, al-Baṭīn, al-Ḥārithī, ʿUmārah ibn ʿAqīl); free poets and poets born as a slave (e.g., Nuṣayb al-Aṣghar) or women sold as concubines. But despite their diversity they can all be called "modern", being active in Abbasid times.

5.2 *The Modern Poets*

Muḥdath means "new, recent, modern", cognate with *ḥadīth*, which also means "new" but has several other meanings and is not normally interchangeable with *muḥdath*. An object may be called *muḥdath*, for instance, and not necessarily in a positive sense. The Umayyad poet Jarīr spoke of a sword that was *muḥdath ghayr ṣārim*, "new, not cutting".[51] It was first applied to some poets who lived in the middle and second half of the 2nd/8th century and thus straddled the two dynasties (*mukhaḍramū l-dawlatayn*), the Umayyads and the Abbasids, to distinguish these poets from the "ancients", *qudamāʾ*; the word *muḥdath* was also used for their poetry.[52] I have translated *muḥdathūn* with "moderns" and *muḥ-*

49 His *al-Badīʿ* is also devoid of his own poetry, but he does quote some of his verses in his book on wine, *Fuṣūl al-tamāthīl*.

50 Egypt is often mentioned but only one poet, Mānī the Madman (al-Majnūn or al-Muwaswis) is said to have been born there; the Arab West (al-Maghrib) falls outside the catchment area of the book.

51 Abū ʿUbaydah, *Naqāʾiḍ Jarīr wa-l-Farazdaq*, 413.

52 Of the many studies on *muḥdath* poetry and poets and the contrast between earlier poetry and poets I only list the following: Goldziher, "Alte und neue Poesie im Urtheile der arabischer Kritiker"; Karam, *La querelle des Anciens et des Modernes dans la poésie arabe au iii^{e}/ix^{e} siècle*; Bonebakker, "Poets and Critics in the Third Century AH"; Jacobi, "Abbasidische Dichtung"; Bencheikh, *Poétique arabe*; Badawi, "From Primary to Secondary Qaṣīdas"; idem, "'Abbasid Poetry and its Antecedents"; Wagner, *Grundzüge der klassischen arabischen Dichtung*, ii, 89–158; Suzanne P. Stetkevych, *Abū Tammām and the Poetics of the ʿAbbasid Age*; Heinrichs, "Ancients and moderns"; van Gelder, "Muḥdathūn"; Fakhreddine, *Metapoesis in the Arabic Tradition: From Modernists to* Muḥdathūn; Alqarni, "Negotiating Abbasid Modernity".

dath with "modern". Some scholars prefer "modernists" and "modernist", terms that imply a more conscious attitude and a kind of agenda. This would certainly apply in the case of some pioneering poets, but I have preferred the more neutral "modern" and "moderns", these being the more idiomatic antonyms of "ancient" and "ancients". Among the poets in Ibn al-Muʿtazz's book there are several whose style is old-fashioned and who are "modern" only in the chronological sense.

The rise of this "modern", novel poetry has been linked with the rise of the non-Arab Muslims (*mawālī*) in status and influence, political, cultural, and literary, coinciding with the early Abbasid period. Bashshār ibn Burd, the first great non-Arab poet and a Persian proud of his ancestry, is called "father of the *muḥdathūn*", after all. Gregor Schoeler sees this rise of the *mawālī* as a turning-point in Arabic literature.[53] But the several kinds of novelties, stylistic, thematic, and formal, did not all begin with the generation of Bashshār or with the Abbasid Dynasty, and among earlier poets noted for such novelties there are many who are ethnically Arab.[54] These novelties of the "modern" poets, as sketched above, were not practised by each and every "modern" poet, and the old "Bedouin" style remained in vogue, and even urban poets went on to describe camels and desert scenes. Ibn Mayyadah (§16), who came from the Arabian Peninsula, "combines the command and pure language of the Bedouin with the beauties and wit of the modern poets", in Ibn al-Muʿtazz' words. Al-Baṭīn (§40), who came from Homs in Syria, "composed fine, well-made poetry, in a Bedouin style". The Persian Bashshār (§2) opens an ode with "O remnants of the abode in Dhāt al-Ṣamd."

The language has remained basically the same, even though the diction becomes less "Bedouin". All poets, whether elite court poets or those from the lower classes (who may well have been illiterate), Arab poets and poets of Persian descent, urban poets and those from the desert, sane poets and mad poets, free men and slaves, male poets and female poets, they all seem to have mastered the standard Classical language with its complex grammar, its idiomatic expressions, and with the rather intricate prosodical conventions of metre and rhyme, as before. There is no poetry in vernacular Arabic. Virtually all the poetry in the *Ṭabaqāt* is in monorhyme (*aaaaa* …), in one of the traditional metres. Paired rhyme (*aabbccdd* …), practised by Ibn al-Muʿtazz himself, is mentioned twice: in the entry on al-Raqāshī (§35), where the opening couplet is quoted of a poem "in which he enjoins people to commit sodomy,

53 Schoeler, "Ein Wendepunkt".

54 See van Gelder, "*Mawālī* and Arabic Poetry", esp. 359–365.

drink wine, gamble, engage in cockfighting and dogfighting", and in the entry on Abān al-Lāḥiqī (§ 38), where his versification in paired rhyme of the famous collection of animal fables, *Kalīlah wa-Dimnah*, is mentioned, without a quotation.

Unlike Ibn Sallām, who only deals with pre- and early Islamic poets in his *Ṭabaqāt*, Ibn Qutaybah (d. 276/889), in his *Kitāb al-Shiʿr wa-l-shuʿarāʾ* (*The Book of Poetry and Poets*), includes the "modern poets", remarking that God has not restricted poetry and eloquence to any particular period, that every old (*qadīm*) poet was once modern (*ḥadīth*), and that the Umayyad poets Jarīr, al-Farazdaq and al-Akhṭal were once considered *muḥdathūn*.[55] Most of Ibn Qutaybah's book is given to the c. 175 pre-moderns, the 28 *muḥdathūn* beginning with Ibn Harmah, al-ʿUmānī, Bashshār ibn Burd and ending with Ashjaʿ al-Sulamī.[56] Philologists, grammarians, and critics were aware of the changes in style and themes that took place in the early Abbasid period. The leading poets were no longer Bedouin but urban and many were of non-Arab descent, such as Bashshār ibn Burd. Although grammarians and lexicographers often admired "modern" poetry, as a general rule it could not serve as evidence for proper Arabic in grammars, such as the seminal book by Sībawayh (d. c. 180/796), or lexicons, such as *Kitāb al-ʿAyn* by al-Khalīl ibn Aḥmad (d. 175/791).

The perceived difference between ancient and modern poetry is expressed in figurative language by some philologists. Ibn al-Aʿrābī (d. 231/845) said, somewhat dismissively of the moderns, "The poems of those moderns such as Abū Nuwās and others are like fragrant herbs (*rayḥān*), that are smelled for one day, wither, and are thrown away. The poems of the ancients are like musk and ambergris: the more you move them, the sweeter they smell."[57] Al-Aṣmaʿī (d. c. 213/828), when he was asked about the *muwalladūn* (a term with several meanings but here equivalent to *muḥdathūn*), replied, "Whatever is good had been said before, whatever is bad is their own. Their style is uneven: a piece of brocade and piece of haircloth".[58] Ibn Rashīq (d. 456/1063–1064 or 463/1071), in his encyclopaedia of poetry and poetics, compared the ancients and the moderns to two men: "One began making a building, constructing it perfectly; the other painted and decorated it."[59] There were, however, also critics who seem

55 Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 63; compare e.g. Rashīq, *ʿUmdah*, i, 90–91.

56 Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 757–885; Abū l-Hindī, a "modern" poet in Ibn al-Muʿtazz's book, occurs much earlier in Ibn Qutaybah (682–683).

57 Al-Marzubānī, *Muwashshaḥ*, 384. Instead of *ḥarraktuhū* ("you move them") one ought to read perhaps *faraktahū* or *farraktahū* ("you rub them").

58 Ibn Rashīq, *ʿUmdah*, i, 90–91, in his chapter *Fī l-qudamāʾ wa-l-muḥdathīn*, i, 90–93; see also his chapter on *al-maʿānī l-muḥdathah*, "modern motifs", ii, 236–245.

59 Ibn Rashīq, *ʿUmdah*, i, 92.

to prefer the moderns. Ibn al-Muʿtazz himself, in his *Ṭabaqāt*,[60] says he discusses modern poets, so that the reader "will not be bothered by the reports of ancient poets and their poems, because people have so often transmitted them to the point of being bored with them." A later anthologist, the Andalusian Ibn Bassām al-Shantarīnī (d. 543/1147) is even more outspoken: "The ears reject 'O dwelling of Mayyah on the high land and the wadi's slope!', one gets bored with 'Remnants of Khawlah's abode on the sand-hills of Thahmad'; 'Stop you two!' has become threadbare (…); God's plague on those who say that the ancients are superior!".[61]

One would expect an anthologist to include all major poets within his scope and perhaps a number of less well-known poets. Ibn al-Muʿtazz does not disappoint, for with one exception all the great "modern" poets of the 2nd/8th and 3rd/9th centuries are there, such as Bashshār ibn Burd, Abū Nuwās, Abū l-ʿAtāhiyah, al-Sayyid al-Ḥimyarī, Muslim ibn al-Walīd, Abū Tammām, and al-Buḥturī. As mentioned above, Ibn al-Muʿtazz, himself a major poet, does not include his own poetry. There is only one other major poet who is conspicuously absent: the very prolific and versatile Ibn al-Rūmī (d. 283/896). Perhaps this is on account of some animosity towards this poet, who had composed invective poetry on Ibn al-Muʿtazz's father.[62] Otherwise, the book is quite inclusive, as shown above, and the compiler does not shun Shi'ite poets or other dissenting views. He did not mind including Durust the Schoolteacher (§ 78) and praising his poetry, even though he notes that this rather obscure poet is said to have hated the Abbasids to the point of wanting to obliterate them. Ibn al-Muʿtazz, it seems to me, did not have a particular axe to grind with his anthology, apart from wanting to entertain and inform, with the mixture of *jidd* and *hazl*, seriousness and jesting, common to so many premodern Arabic literary compilations.

One of the obscure poets in the book, Muṣʿab al-Muwaswis (see § 102), lists ten "sciences" (*ʿulūm*), including geometry, medicine, grammar, jurisprudence, playing chess, and polo; but the chief one, which "swipes away all others, is the knowledge of reports and anecdotes about modern people". The last word, *al-muḥdathīn*, could also be read as *al-muḥaddithīn*, "transmitters of Hadith" but I suspect *al-muḥdathīn* is correct, and this could also be taken to mean "the mod-

60 p. 125.

61 Ibn Bassām, *Dhakhīrah*, i, 12–14; he alludes to famous pre-Islamic poems by al-Nābighah al-Dhubyānī, Zuhayr, and Imru' al-Qays.

62 ʿAbbās, *Tārīkh al-naqd*, 117; McKinney, *The Case of Rhyme versus Reason*, 22; and see Ibn al-Rūmī, *Dīwān*, (i,) 338–339, the passage beginning *Daʿi l-khilāfata yā Muʿtazzu min kathabin* … ("Give up the Caliphate, Muʿtazz, right now!").

ern poets". Ibn al-Muʿtazz's book fits in with this "science". The reader may get the impression that jests seem to outweigh seriousness, and the sensitivities of some readers not familiar with premodern Arabic literature may be shocked by the contents. There are many sonorous odes, panegyrics, elegies, and wise sayings in verse and prose, it is true, but there are rather more poems about wine, vicious lampoons, and anecdotes with irreligious behaviour and obscenities; taverns are mentioned around twice as often as mosques. Among the poets there are pious ones and libertine ones, but although religion is never far away, there is no strictly religious poetry and no mystical verse. The early Sufi poets, some of them predating or contemporary with Ibn al-Muʿtazz, are not represented.

Albert Arazi reads the book as "un ouvrage anti-shuʿūbite" (i.e., against those arguing for the superiority of Persians above Arabs) and "un ouvrage pro-ʿabbāside et anti-shīʿite".[63] One can concur with this only to a limited extent; being pro-Abbasid and anti-Shi'ite is what could be expected of a member of the ruling dynasty. But Shi'ite poets are not excluded from the book; among them is al-Sayyid al-Ḥimyarī (§ 3), who is highly praised, as are Abū l-Shīṣ, who has a long chapter (§ 9), and Diʿbil (§ 45). As for an alleged pro-Arab and anti-Persian bias, see below, where I discuss the clearly spurious preamble. Arazi also sees the book as supporting the "literary" and stylistic interpretation of the concept of *iʿjāz al-Qur'ān*, the alleged inimitability of the Qur'an.[64] Here he depends solely on the preamble, which he believes, surely wrongly, to be genuine in spirit if not wording; the main text is not relevant for the study of *iʿjāz* and never contrasts Qur'anic style with that of poetry.

As for less well-known poets, the book is a treasure-trove. Julia Bray aptly describes it:[65] "instead of the compendium of panegyrics that one might expect, Ibn al-Muʿtazz puts together a portrait-gallery of glorious eccentrics, using the simplest, conversational *akhbār* to bring poets to life, a technique which suggests the *majlis*, as does his care to avoid exhausting a subject." This makes it a book that is often very entertaining. In one of the very few western articles specifically about the book, Teresa Garulo emphasises "its worth as a literary work and a source for the study of humour in Arabic literature" and she calls it

> a very curious repository of biographies of ʿAbbāsid poets, with especial attention to the least known among them, but with personalities that

63 Arazi, "Poétique and politique", 267–270, 271–285, respectively.

64 Arazi, "Poésie et politique", 285–291.

65 Bray, "Ibn al-Muʿtazz and Politics", 109.

> might give occasion to tell a good story about their wit or their folly. So we have, at the same time that we receive information about some very famous poets, a remarkable record full of empathy and humour with tales of madmen, profligate people and rogues and scoundrels boasting of their trades.[66]

With the "major poets" I mentioned above I referred to those who now belong to the canon of Classical Arabic literature. However, as Wolfhart Heinrichs says, the inclusion by Ibn al-Muʿtazz of almost unknown poets, some of whom are highly praised, "raises the intriguing question of canon formation."[67] One will look in vain, for instance, in modern reference works on Arabic literature for ʿAbd al-Malik ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥīm al-Ḥārithī (§ 49). But Ibn al-Muʿtazz extols his poetry as if he were a major poet:

> an excellent poet, eloquent, proficient, and naturally gifted (…) Poets acknowledged him as their leader and submitted to him. He is one of those poets copies of whose poems were written in gold (…) Poets and literati are unanimous in declaring that these verses are not in the style of his age and that no one could aspire to anything similar. Upon my life, these words, with their eloquence and strength, are such that if you hear them, you would think you could compose something like them; but if one attempts this, one finds it as unattainable as the Pleiades. Such is the case with poetry that is of extreme excellence that is out of reach.

Abū ʿUyaynah ibn Muḥammad ibn Abī ʿUyaynah al-Muhallabī (§ 53), not recognised today as a major poet, is called "one of the four naturally gifted poets", with Bashshār, Abū l-ʿAtāhiyah, and al-Sayyid al-Ḥimyarī. Among the ten poets who are represented with the largest number of quoted verses only two are today considered major poets: Abū Nuwās, who ranks third, with 163 verses, and Bashshār (ninth, with 86 verses.). The poet with the most quoted verses (192) is Rabīʿah al-Raqqī (§ 30), closely followed by Abū l-Shīṣ (§ 9, 189 verses). Rabīʿah is another poet who is virtually absent in modern studies and reference works, yet Ibn al-Muʿtazz finds his love poetry "superior to the poems of all his contemporaries and to many of those who lived before him. I cannot find anyone whose love poetry is more natural and sounder than Rabīʿah's." One must admit that Rabīʿah's poetry is charming indeed.

66 Garulo, "Humor y excentricidad", English summary, 427.

67 Heinrichs, "Ibn al-Muʿtazz", 168 (= 110 in his *Essays and Articles*).

Although some of the poets in the book are described as poor, being a poet could be lucrative. As is related in numerous anecdotes, many poets received fabulous sums for a few dozen verses, perhaps with a number of robes, a slave-girl, a fief, or a regular stipend and a booncompanionship. Some poets became very wealthy. The rewards mentioned may seem excessive at times (until they are compared with the absurd prices paid today for works of art), but a praise poem could bolster a reputation, just as an invective poem could break it. No doubt the patrons' hords of gold dinars and silver dirhams were extorted from countless exploited tenants, dependents, or slave labourers, but this is not the place for a woke historical study of poets' earnings.

To compensate for the lack of balanced criticism in Ibn al-Muʿtazz's book, noted above, here is a translation of a passage containing short, epigrammatic, impressionistic, and at times cryptic characterisations of many *muḥdathūn* poets by the philologist Abū Ḥātim al-Sijistānī (d. 255/869), answering questions by the poet and lexicographer Ibn Durayd (d. 321/933).[68] It is a "modern" counterpart of *Fuḥūlat al-shuʿarāʾ*, a short work that only discusses pre-*muḥdath* poets, and where Abū Ḥātim asks the questions and al-Aṣmaʿī gives the answers.

> Ibn Durayd said: I asked Abū Ḥātim about Abū Nuwās [§ 33]. He said, "If he is serious, he is good, if he jests, he is witty. In his descriptions he exaggerates, he blurts out his speech without thinking (*yulqī l-kalām ʿalā ʿawāhinihī*), without caring where he takes it from." This quotation I found in his [viz., Ibn Durayd's] *Dictations*, in the course of twenty-five characterisations of modern poets, which I shall quote here in full, since they are informative. He said: I asked him about Bashshār [§ 2]. He said, "One who observes, who dives deep; he is prolix, proficient, he describes what he has not seen as if he has seen it. But there are many defects in his poetry." I asked, "And Marwān [§ 5]?" He said, "A poet who is pleased with himself, who admires everything he produces; vain, thinking that no one outstrips him; with much that is correct and much that is wrong. His poetry is not artful." I asked, "And Muslim [§ 37]?" He said, "A gulf of pure water taken from a muddy sea; like a flint that strikes fire at times and fails to strike fire at other times." I asked, "And Abū l-ʿAtāhiyah [§ 36]?" He said, "Lots of rubbish, a facile ability, poetry like glass beads that sometimes resemble

68 Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān*, i, 15–17, in the introduction of Ḥamzah al-Iṣfahānī's commentary; also quoted in al-Suyūṭī, *Tuḥfat al-adīb*, 174–175 (oddly in the section on al-Jāḥiẓ) and al-Marṣafī, *Wasīlah*, ii, 363–364. Much annotation could be added but I have limited it to a minimum. I have inserted the corresponding section numbers in Ibn al-Muʿtazz's *Ṭabaqāt*.

rubies and emeralds." I asked, "And Ibn al-Aḥnaf [§ 42]?" He said, "He lowers his bucket among other buckets, sometimes scooping up clear water and sometimes muddy water. But there is more muddy water than clear water." I asked, "And Wālibah ibn al-Ḥubāb [§ 10]?" He said, "One who produces mixed descriptions. His openings are better than his endings. His good poetry is finely crafted." I asked, "And Salm al-Khāsir [§ 15]?" He said, "One who produced little poetry, a panegyrist whose poetry is silk brocade and dyed wool. He adulterates the bad stuff to make it resemble the good." I asked, "And al-ʿAttābī [§ 44]?" He said, "Learned in the poetry of the (ancient) Arabs, following their patterns at times, and sometimes inclining towards complex speech, but attaining his goal in either case." I asked, "And al-Khuraymī [§ 55]?" He said, "His art is easy; he does not try to surpass his naturalness, he does not exert his thought; he drives what lets itself be driven by him spontaneously." I asked, "And Ashjaʿ [§ 41]?" He said, "Sweet and bitter, good and bad, his passages are different in quality. You could say his verse is natural, or you could say it is artificial." I asked, "And Abū l-Shīṣ [§ 9]?" He said, "All seriousness, containing what is sweet and what is repugnant, like a lotus tree that is shaken, dropping sweet and repugnant fruits." I asked, "And ʿAlī ibn Jabalah [§ 31]?" He said, "One who searches for grandiose diction and impressive motifs; he does not reach the level of the ancients but is beyond the level of his peers." I asked, "And Diʿbil [§ 45]?" He said, "Vigorous poetry, well-crafted, with little elegance; with obscene invective and panegyric that does not convince." I asked, "And Abū Tammām [§ 51]?" He said, "A torrent carrying a lot of rubbish, overflowing abundantly, pouring copiously, but when limpid it is choice wine with pure water." I asked, "And al-Khārakī [§ 62]?" He said, "Charming, producing little, the diction relaxed and the motifs complicated." I asked, "And Abū Saʿd Qawṣarah [§ 56]?" He said, "Verdant leaves and weak wood; if memorised it is of no use, if it is lost it does no harm." I asked, "And Ibn Bashīr?"[69] He said, "Sweet and easy speech; if he wants something he is able, even though there is strong constraint in attaining his goal." I asked, "And Ibn Abī ʿUyaynah?"[70] He said, "He admired his own ability so much that he overstepped his limit; but in his vaunting poetry he is proficient and when he brands, he cooks well-done."[71] I asked, "And ʿAbd

69 This is probably an error for (Muḥammad) Ibn Yasīr (al-Riyāshī, § 50).

70 Probably meaning Abū ʿUyaynah Muḥammad ibn Abī ʿUyaynah (§ 53).

71 Referring to invective poetry; cf. Diʿbil, *Dīwān*, 160: "If you brand, cook it well-done" (*idhā kawayta fa-anḍijī*).

> al-Ṣamad ibn al-Muʿadhdhal [§ 92]?" He said, "One who goes out and goes in far, sometimes losing his way and sometimes finding the right path; if he follows the way of the early Arabs he is expert,[72] and if he inclines toward the ways of the Moderns he resembles them." I asked, "And ʿAlī ibn al-Jahm [§ 68]?" He said, "Solid speech, a rugged path; his intellect prevails in his poetry over his natural talent." I asked, "And Bakr ibn al-Naṭṭāḥ [§ 34]?" He said, "He tries to resemble the Bedouin Arabs and exaggerates; he oversteps the limit of the Moderns and becomes prolix. Thus he is someone who falls between the two groups." I asked, "And Khālid the Carpenter (al-Najjār) [§ 70]?" He said, "Bad speech, slack of construction; in long poems he is dull-witted, when he is brief he makes an effort." I asked, "And Abū Dulāmah [§ 6]?" He said, "Seriousness and jesting; gathered and desired;[73] if he aims at a goal he takes it, whether lean or fat." I asked, "And Abū l-Shamaqmaq [§ 20]?" He said, "His lampoons are burning, his panegyrics are without lustre; most of it is useless." I asked, "And So-and-so?"[74] He said, "Speech that is put together; relished lip-smackingly by the ears of the ignorant, spat out by the ears of the learned." Ibn Durayd adds: I forgot to ask him about the two naturally gifted poets, al-Sayyid [§ 3] and al-Namarī [§ 39].[75]

It is not known when Ibn al-Muʿtazz composed his *Ṭabaqāt*. Abbas Eghbal, the editor of the facsimile edition, believes it was a late work, from the last few years of the author's life.[76] The editor of the Cairo edition, ʿAbd al-Sattār Muḥammad Farrāj, thinks it was completed before 280/892–893; he argues that describing Muḥammad ibn ʿArūs al-Shīrāzī (§ 126), who died in 280/893–894 or in the 280s, as "these days the poet of the time", means that the book was compiled when that poet was still alive. However, it is possible, even likely, that the book was compiled over many years, until shortly before Ibn al-Muʿtazz's death. Perhaps his sudden and untimely demise prevented him from polishing and completing it.

5.3 *The Manuscripts and Editions; Its Authenticity*

A major problem with Ibn al-Muʿtazz's book is that the main text is known only from one, late manuscript dated 1285/1869, which is, moreover, very defect-

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72 Meaning of *arraba* unclear; I have read it as *ariba*. The word is missing in *Tuḥfat al-adīb*.

73 *Marghūb fīhi*; but *Tuḥfat al-adīb* and *Wasīlah* have *marghūb ʿanhu*, "disliked".

74 *Fulān*; apparently either Ibn Durayd or a transmitter had forgotten the name.

75 Ḥamzah al-Iṣfahānī continues at some length with a characterisation of these two poets.

76 Farrāj, in his introduction to *Ṭabaqāt*, 13–14; Eghbal, in his introduction, xvii.

ive in some respects. The copyist gives no information about his source or sources. This manuscript has been reproduced in facsimile by the Iranian scholar Abbas Eghbal (ʿAbbās Iqbāl, also called Abbas Eqbal Ashtiany, 1896–1956), who privately owned it; its present whereabouts are unknown. Abbas published this facsimile edition in 1939, with a French introduction, notes, and variants.[77] Eghbal's English title page has "The Ṭabaqāt al-Shuʿarāʾ al-muḥdathīn"; the Arabic title page follows the manuscript in having *Ṭabaqāt al-shuʿarāʾ fī madḥ al-khulafāʾ wa-l-wuzarāʾ* (*The Classes of Poets in Praise of Caliphs and Viziers*), a title that does not correctly describe the book (see also below) and, judging by quotations in premodern works, should be rejected. The copyist was clearly out of his depth or very careless and the text contains numerous errors and obscurities. It is also carelessly written, erratically dotted, and often orthographically irregular. Many of the errors are obvious and are easily rectified, but many others pose problems, especially for poems and prose passages for which no parallels can be found in other sources. Eghbal, in his notes, proposed countless corrections and suggestions, most of which were adopted by the Egyptian scholar ʿAbd al-Sattār Aḥmad Farrāj (1915–1981), a prolific and experienced editor of classical Arabic texts, in his edition of the work.[78] Farrāj added many useful emendations and suggestions of his own, almost all of which I have gratefully adopted. Largely thanks to the availability of many electronically searchable classical Arabic works on the internet I was able, in a modest way, to make further corrections and suggestions on the basis of parallels I found.

An abridgement of the *Ṭabaqāt* was made by Abū l-Barakāt al-Mubārak ibn Aḥmad al-Irbilī Sharaf al-Dīn ibn al-Mustawfī (564–637/1170–1239), one of those many literate viziers in Arabic literary history.[79] This text is preserved in the Escorial.[80] Although entitled *Mukhtaṣar*, "abridgment, shortened version",

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77 London: Luzac, 1939 (E.J.W. Gibb Memorial, N.S., xiii); xxii, 55, 228 pp.; a review by J.H.D. [= James Heyworth-Dunne] appeared in *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 10 (1940), 518–520.

78 Ibn al-Muʿtazz, *Ṭabaqāt al-shuʿarāʾ*, ed. ʿAbd al-Sattār Aḥmad Farrāj, Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, 1956, ^{2}1968, ^{3}1976, 604 pp. The word *al-muḥdathīn* is not on the title page. It contains an Arabic translation of Eghbal's introduction (585–598). To my knowledge there are two further editions. One is by ʿUmar Fārūq al-Ṭabbāʿ (Beirut, 1419/1998, 567 pp.). This much inferior edition is derivative from the edition by Farrāj; it adds many notes on biographical and lexicographical matters, except where one really needs them. Repeatedly it mentions suggested emendations by Farrāj as if they were manuscript versions. Another edition, by Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Hawwārī (Beirut, 2002) is currently not accessible to me.

79 See on him Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, iv, 147–152; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xxv, 106–110; GAL, S I, 496; Smyth, "Criticism in the Post-Classical Period", 390–391.

80 MS Escorial 279 (50 folios, completed AH630/1233); for a description see Derenbourg,

it contains parts not found in the base manuscript, such as a preamble, the entries on Ibn Harmah (§1) and three of the six female poets, ʿInān (§127), Sakan (§128), and ʿĀʾishah al-ʿUthmāniyyah (§129), as well as numerous shorter passages; all these parts are given by Eghbal in his Introduction. Following Farrāj I have inserted the four missing entries into the main text. He relegated the shorter passages and variants of the *Mukhtaṣar*, as *ziyādāt* (addenda), to an appendix (pp. 429–461). I have, however, inserted these additions into the main text, between square brackets, giving other interesting variants in footnotes at the relevant places.

The preamble in the *Mukhtaṣar*, which is lacking in the *Ṭabaqāt*, poses another problem. Eghbal calls it clearly spurious on account of its flowery style and some oddities and inaccuracies, and Farrāj agrees.[81] They are certainly right. Wolfhart Heinrichs considers it and the incorrect title in the manuscript "in all likelihood the products of a forger".[82] The occurrence of *sajʿ*, rhyming prose, does not necessarily disprove Ibn al-Muʿtazz's authorship, because he uses it in other works such as the opening of *Fuṣūl al-tamāthīl* and in some of his aphorisms and aperçus (*fuṣūl*), but the preamble of the *Mukhtaṣar* is much more flowery than his usual style, for instance in its use of compound *sajʿ*: *... alladhī afḥama maṣāqiʿ al-fuṣaḥāʾ * bi-muʿjiz kalāmih * wa-akhrasa shaqāshiq al-bulaghāʾ * bi-tartībihī wa-niẓāmih * wa-bahara l-ʿArab al-ʿarbāʾ * bi-khtirāʿ maftaḥihī wa-khitāmihī* .... The repeated emphasis on Arabness ("the pure-blooded Arabs ... the fortunes of the Arabs ... The Arabs proudly rejoiced ...") is at odds with Ibn al-Muʿtazz's usual style; the inclusiveness of his anthology does not show a bias towards Arabs. On the contrary, there are countless non-Arab *mawālī* ("clients") among the poets in the book and their status is never held against them. The preamble, moreover, contains some odd statements. Its

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Les manuscripts arabes de l'Escurial, 1. Grammaire, rhétorique, poésie, philologie et belles-lettres, lexicographie, philosophie, p. 171: Title on fol. 1a: *Kitāb Mukhtaṣar Ṭabaqāt al-shuʿarāʾ*; another title fol. 2a: *al-Mukhtār min Ṭabaqāt al-shuʿarāʾ li-Abī l-ʿAbbās ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Muʿtazz*. Derenbourg does not mention al-Mubārak ibn Aḥmad al-Irbilī and says that the MS was finished 630/1235. See Cano Ledesma, *Indización de los manuscritos árabes de El Escorial*, Madrid: Ediciones Escurialenses, 1997, II, 78; al-Mubārak ibn Aḥmad began the abridgment in 590/1194 and finished it only in 630/1233 (Garulo, "Humor", 428); see online version of Cano Ledesma, *Indización*, ii, 78: "81. *Kitāb mujtaṣar ṭabaqāt al-šuʿarāʾ* (Resumen anónimo de la obra *Ṭabaqāt al-šuʿarāʾ* de Ibn al-Muʿtazz) (Ms. autógrafo de 630/1232 ⟨E.o.⟩ Ms. D. 279 /C 277.)".

81 Eghbal's Introduction, xv: "Une étude, même superficielle, de cette introduction et de son style fleuri et ampoulé nous révèle une nette différence avec le style simple et naturel d'Ibn al-Muʿtazz"; see Farrāj's Introduction, 8 and my notes on this preamble, below.

82 Heinrichs, "Ibn al-Muʿtazz", 167.

author says, "I called my book *The Classes of Theologian-Poets* (*?*) *from among the Early Men of Letters* (*Ṭabaqāt al-shuʿarāʾ al-mutakallimīn min al-udabāʾ al-mutaqaddimīn*)", where the words "Theologian(s)" and "Early" are clearly nonsensical. He also says that he intends to "record in a book the poems composed by poets in praise of the caliphs, the viziers, and the military commanders of the Abbasids". Now it is true that such poems are indeed found in the extant text, but the scope of the book is, fortunately for the modern reader, much broader. More than once Ibn al-Muʿtazz quotes the customary lyrical, amatory introduction of a panegyric ode at some length, limiting the panegyric sequel to a few verses or even omitting it altogether. Arazi argues that the original preamble may have been rewritten and adapted at some time between 296/908 and 590/1194, keeping the general sense (*al-qawl bi-l-maʿnā*) rather than a *verbatim* text (*al-qawl bi-l-lafẓ*). But he seems too optimistic when he considers the present preamble "un texte authentique établis selon les exigences d'*al-qawl bi-l-maʿnā*",[83] because even the *maʿnā* makes no sense on several counts.

The authenticity of the *Ṭabaqāt* as a whole has been doubted by Muḥammad Badīʿ Sharīf. In the introduction to his edition of Ibn al-Muʿtazz's collected poetry, his *Dīwān*, he gives his arguments:[84]

- The main MS is relatively recent and gives no information about an older manuscript from which it was copied;
- No other MSS are known, apart from the *Mukhtaṣar*, which is also a unicum;
- The text is extremely faulty, orthographically defective, and incomplete;
- The introduction, as is generally acknowledged, is spurious;
- The prose style of the *Ṭabaqāt* is poor (*muhalhal*), unlike Ibn al-Muʿtazz's style in his preserved prose works;
- The content, with lots of "cheap obscenity" (*al-mujūn al-rakhīṣ*) and praise of the poetry of heretics (*al-tanwīh bi-shiʿr al-zanādiqah*), is unworthy of and uncharacteristic of Ibn al-Muʿtazz;
- If Ibn al-Muʿtazz were the author, he would have included more panegyric poems on the Abbasid caliphs and princes, such as al-Buḥturī's *madīḥ* on his father al-Muʿtazz. Instead, the very short section on al-Buḥturī only quotes trivial verses.

Most of these arguments seem insufficient or even wholly invalid in arguing against the authenticity. As far as I know, other scholars have no problems

83 Arazi, "Poétique et politique", 264–266. Julia Bray seems to agree with Arazi's evaluation; she admits that the introductory section is "certainly garbled" but does not reject it altogether ("Ibn al-Muʿtazz and Politics", 113); James Montgomery also appears to accept Arazi's views (Ibn al-Muʿtazz, *In Deadly Embrace*, xvi–xvii).

84 Ibn al-Muʿtazz, *Dīwān*, i, 206–208.

with it.[85] As for "cheap obscenity", deemed unworthy and uncharacteristic of Ibn al-Muʿtazz, he was in fact not averse to *mujūn* in his own poetry.[86] The authenticity is evident also from several quotations, such as in Abū l-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī's *al-Aghānī*,[87] Ibn Khallikān in his *Wafayāt al-aʿyān*,[88] Ibn Shākir in his *Fawāt*,[89] and al-Ṣafadī in his *al-Wāfī*.[90] Ḥamzah al-Iṣfahānī, in his redaction of Abū Nuwās's *Dīwān* (i, 14), quotes from "ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Muʿtazz's book called *al-Ikhtiyār min ashʿār al-muḥdathīn* (*Selection of Poems by the Moderns*)",[91] and in the lengthy Chapter 15 of Ḥamzah's redaction of this *Dīwān*, on the life of Abū Nuwās, he says that "most stories in this chapter are from the book by ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Muʿtazz that he compiled on the classes of the modern poets."[92]

Ibn al-Muʿtazz's *Ṭabaqāt* is not the only book devoted wholly or in part to "modern" poets. Fuat Sezgin's *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums* may be consulted for the list of numerous works, many of them not preserved, on poets and poetry predating or following Ibn al-Muʿtazz.[93] Mention should be made of *Ṭabaqāt al-shuʿarāʾ* by the poet Diʿbil (who has an entry in the present work, § 45), known only through quotations; and of *al-Rawḍah* (*The Meadow*) by Ibn

85 See e.g. Iḥsān ʿAbbās in his *Tārīkh al-naqd al-adabī ʿinda l-ʿArab*, who quotes from the book (116–119) without questioning its authenticity, even though he is not impressed by the level of criticism shown in it. See also Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Munʿim Khafājī, *Ibn al-Muʿtazz waturāthuhū fī l-adab wa-l-naqd wa-l-bayān*, 521–527 on the work, without any comments on its authenticity, apart from the spurious *muqaddimah*.

86 See e.g. al-Ṣūlī, *Awrāq*, iii, 141–142, 143, and see the many instances of expurgated words or passages (mostly in the section of invective poetry, *hijāʾ*) in the *Dīwān* in al-Ṣūlī's redaction, ed. Yūnus Aḥmad al-Sāmarrāʾī, i, 647, 653, 654, 656, 660, 671, 674, 691, 697, 699, 704, 708, 709, 714, 725, 734, 736, 739, 740, ii, 590, indicated with ellipsis (three or more dots). According to al-Suyūṭī, (*Wishāḥ*, 178), "Ibn al-Muʿtazz often used it [viz., the word *kuss*, "cunt"] in his verse"; a fact not verified because of editorial interference. The bowdlerized *Dīwān* editions by Sharīf and by Dār Ṣādir simply and silently omit obscenities. Muḥammad Badīʿ Sharīf even writes (i, 202) that "Ibn al-Muʿtazz was aware that he was chaste of language, with the noble character of a prince in eloquence, above the ways of the rabble". Shawqī Ḍayf goes one step further: "It is only natural that one does not find any *hijāʾ* by Ibn al-Muʿtazz, for he rises above this genre …" (*al-ʿAṣr al-ʿAbbāsī al-thānī*, 339).

87 See *GAS*, xvi, 223, referring to Fleischhammer, *Die Quellen des Kitāb al-Aġānī*, 73–74, 110–111.

88 Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, iii, 352: *qāla Ibn al-Muʿtazz fī Ṭabaqāt al-shuʿarāʾ* …

89 Ibn Shākir, *Fawāt*, iii, 183, 185.

90 Al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, 290.

91 Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān*, i, 14, and see below, p. 293 note 93.

92 Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān*, v, 470: *akthar mā fī hādhā l-bāb min ḥikāyāt ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Muʿtazz fī l-kitāb alladhī ṣannafahū fī ṭabaqāt al-shuʿarāʾ al-muḥdathīn*. There are several parallels between this chapter and Ibn al-Muʿtazz's book, but *akthar*, "most" is an exaggeration, unless the *Ṭabaqāt* was once larger than the extant text.

93 *GAS*, ii, 93–102, 439–441, ix, 262–263.

al-Muʿtazz's teacher al-Mubarrad, partly preserved through quotations. Unlike Ibn al-Muʿtazz, al-Mubarrad often criticises verses perceived as faulty. The same is true of *al-Muwashshaḥ* by al-Marzubānī (d. 384/994), which is wholly devoted to errors and infelicities in poetry, and which has a section on *muḥdathūn*. A short book on modern poets is the above-mentioned *al-Waraqah* by Ibn al-Muʿtazz's friend and fellow-victim in 296/908, Muḥammad ibn Dāwūd Ibn al-Jarrāḥ; the extant version is apparently incomplete. As Wolfhart Heinrichs notes, "The lack of overlap between the two works is notable".[94] As mentioned above, al-Ṣūlī's *al-Awrāq* has a very long chapter on Ibn al-Muʿtazz in the section on poetry by sons of caliphs. Another part of *al-Awrāq* is devoted to "Reports on Modern Poets"; it has long sections on relatively few poets and has only two of them in common with Ibn al-Muʿtazz: Abān al-Lāḥiqī (§ 38) and Ashjaʿ al-Sulamī (§ 41).

Finally, the great book by Abū l-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī* (*The Book of Songs*) should be mentioned, which in spite of being unfinished dwarfs all the works mentioned before in scope and volume.[95] It has chapters, some of them very lengthy, on poets and musicians, the former category being dominant. It is not organised chronologically but arranged on the basis of song texts (*aṣwāt*, sg. *ṣawt*), a few verses usually taken from a longer poem. The poets range from the pre-Islamic period to Ibn al-Muʿtazz, who has an entry.

5.4 *The Translation*

The present translation owns much to the combined editorial efforts of Abbas Eghbal and ʿAbd al-Sattār Aḥmad Farrāj, mentioned above. The more important of their emendations are mentioned in notes. Exhaustively recording all emendations, many of them obvious and trivial, would have made the annotation, already extensive, disproportionally large. In some cases I have followed my own views, also explained in notes. Many problems remain and I have confessed my ignorance or uncertainty on many occasions. It is only through translation that problems of interpretations come to light explicitly, and this is one of the most important functions of translating.

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94 Heinrichs, "Ibn al-Muʿtazz", 168. Poets the two works have in common are the following (with section numbers of *Ṭabaqāt* added): Abū l-Khaṭṭāb al-Bahdalī (§ 22); ʿAlī ibn Jabalah al-ʿAkawwak (§ 31); al-Baṭīn (§ 40); Abū Muḥammad al-Yazīdī (§ 48); Abū Yaʿqūb al-Khuraymī (§ 55); Muḥammad ibn Ḥāzim al-Bāhilī (§ 63); ʿAbd Allāh ibn Abī Umayyah (§ 69); Abū Firʿawn al-Sāsī (§ 96); Abū l-Simṭ Marwān ibn Abī Ḥafṣah (§ 106); al-Qiṣāfī ʿAmr b. Naṣr (§ 121); ʿInān (§ 127).

95 See especially Kilpatrick, *Making the Great Book of Songs*. The Cairo edition (by Dār al-Kutub and al-Hayʾah al-Miṣriyyah al-ʿĀmmah) is in 24 volumes; the contents are listed by Kilpatrick in an appendix (291–320).

No attempt has been made to make "poetic" translations, with metre or rhyme, or turning Arabic poetry into what reads as modern English poetry. I have tried to stay as close to the Arabic as possible, to give the reader a taste of the original, at the risk of the result at times sounding somewhat stilted or wooden. In "serious" poems (panegyric, elegy, gnomic verse) the English register is often more formal, slightly archaic at times, than in lampoons or epigrams. In dialogue between equals the English is more informal. I have retained the direct speech used in Arabic, even where in English indirect speech would often be used. Unlike many Arabists I do not automatically and mechanically translate the vocative particle *yā* as "O"; it can usually be omitted or rendered by means of an exclamation mark. Only in elevated poetic or rhetorical speech is "O" justified. I have given literal translations, even in dialogue, of some pious formulas (*aṣlaḥaka llāh*, "May God make you prosper"), but I have occasionally replaced the common idiom "May I be your ransom" and its variants by less exotic English ("Dear Sir!").

Among Ibn al-Muʿtazz's critical comments there are some formulas that recur to introduce quotations, among them the oft-repeated *wa-mimmā yustaḥsanu lahū*, which is ambiguous because *yustaḥsanu* can mean "is admired" or "is considered fine/beautiful" (by the literate class) as well as "is admirable" (in the author's view). To relieve the monotony somewhat I have not tried to be consistent in my translation.

Ibn al-Muʿtazz introduces most of his reports with an *isnād*, mentioning one or more transmitters. Although some readers, especially non-specialists, may be put off by the concomitant proliferation of names, I have not relegated such chains of transmission to the annotation but retained them, translating the frequent *ḥaddathanī x* as "X told me", *akhbaranī x* as "X informed me", and the preposition *ʿan* as "on the authority of". Often these expressions are accompanied by *qāla*, "he said", which has normally not been translated when it is superfluous, or when it is conveyed by the use of quotation marks. Ibn al-Muʿtazz and others often use the first-person plural "We" instead of "I", for no apparent reason; I have retained the distinction. He almost always uses the singular in *ḥaddathanī*, "(so-and-so) told me", perhaps stressing that he did not attend classes but was always informed in private conversations (for exceptions see p. 604: *ḥaddathanā*, p. 608: *akhbaranā*). Using quotation marks for direct speech is obviously impossible when a chain of transmitters is involved, with several speeches within speeches, but I have normally used them when the last transmitter is himself part of the story he relates.

Premodern Arabic often uses *qāla* ("he said") and other verbs without mentioning the subject if this can be deduced from the context. In conformity

with English practice I have sometimes made the subject explicit ("the Caliph replied …") for the sake of greater clarity.

Qur'anic quotations are in italics. I have made my own translations.

Many common Arabic words have more than one sense and have been rendered differently depending on the context. Among them are the following:

amīr (pl. *umarā'*), "commander" (as in *Amīr al-Mu'minīn*, "Commander of the Believers", the common way to refer to or to address the Caliph); when referring to military and other leaders, translated as "emir".
ghulām (pl. *ghilmān*), "young man", "servant"; often a euphemism for *ʿabd*, "slave".
khādim, "servant", but often a euphemism for *khaṣiyy*, "eunuch".
fatā (pl. *fityān*, *fityah*), "young man" or simply "man", usually with positive connotations.
jāriyah (pl. *jawārī*), "girl", "young woman", "slave girl, slave woman", "concubine".
shaykh, (pl. *shuyūkh*), "old man", "teacher".
mawlā, "master", "client", in the text usually the latter (plural: *mawālī*); and often referring to non-Arabs linked with an Arab tribe or Arab leader; in such cases often left untranslated as *mawlā*.
kātib (pl. *kuttāb*), "scribe, secretary, state secretary, civil servant, high official, bureaucrat".
adab, "good breeding; good conduct; erudition; knowledge of literature; literature".
ẓarf, "refined behaviour; refinement; charm; elegance; wit; esprit".

The pagination of Farrāj's edition, second printing/edition (*al-ṭabʿah al-thāniyah*, 1968), identical with the third (*al-ṭabʿah al-thālithah*, 1976), is given in the margin in square brackets [], that of the manuscript in Eghbal's facsimile edition is given in braces (curly brackets) {}. Square brackets are also used for parts not found in the base manuscript but only in the *Mukhtaṣar* (such as §§1, 127–129, and numerous shorter passages).

5.5 *The Annotation*

The footnotes are intended to cater for specialists as well as general readers without knowledge of Arabic or much familiarity with premodern Arab and Islamic history. At the beginning of each entry a note gives brief information about the poet, with references to entries in other premodern sources, giving precedence to older sources and without being exhaustive. Since Abū l-Faraj

al-Iṣfahānī's *Aghānī* is so often mentioned, I refer to it simply as *Aghānī*, omitting the author's name. This initial note also gives entries in modern reference works such as Sezgin's *Geschichte des Arabischen Schrifttums* (abbreviated as *GAS*), the editions of *The Encyclopaedia of Islam* (*EI2*, *EI3*), Meisami and Starkey's *Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature* (*EAL*), and some important secondary literature, mostly in western languages; adding modern Arabic secondary studies would swell the annotation unduly. Other notes provide information on names, places, events, technical terms, parallels in other premodern sources (again not exhaustively and favouring older sources), references to the collected verse (*Dīwān* or *Shiʿr*) of a poet if this has been published in a modern edition, and to existing translations by others. Variants in parallels are given only if they are interesting or illuminating, or possibly better than the text of the *Ṭabaqāt*. If no parallels of verses were found, which is very often the case, this is mentioned, thus showing the importance of the book as a unique source of much early Abbasid poetry. I have also used the notes for mentioning emendations, those by Abbas Eghbal, ʿAbd al-Sattār Aḥmad Farrāj, and myself; for justifying or explaining my translation; and, unfortunately rather often, for admitting uncertainty about my interpretation or my ignorance of the meaning. *Qawl lā adrī niṣf al-ʿilm*, "Saying 'I don't know' is half-knowing", an adage attributed to several ancient authorities.

Translation of
The Modern Poets
by
ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Muʿtazz

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[The Book of the Categories of the Poets on the Praise of Caliphs and Viziers][1] {1} [17]

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful. From Him we seek help.

○ Introduction (Spurious)

[Praise be to God, who dumbfounded the most articulate of fluent speakers with His inimitable speech, who silenced the tongues of the eloquent with its ordering and structure, and who dazzled the pure-blooded Arabs with the originality of its opening and conclusion. The trickle oozing from one's imagination cannot rise to the fast-flowing pure water[1] of the true nature of His omnipotence, the amplest understanding is incapable of probing the extent of the vastness of His sovereignty, and the thoughts of the wisest sages cannot hope to grasp a glance of the ethereal aspects of His divinity. He distinguished the human species from its genus by the distinction of having speech. Among them He gave preference to the class of kings, whose virtues, shared between the elite and the common people, were magnified, and among His created beings He singled out our Prophet Muḥammad, on whom be the best blessing and peace.

I praise Him as one who acknowledges that he falls short of giving what is due to Him, and I thank Him as one who draws from the oceans of His grace, turning repentantly to Him with his whole being. And blessing and peace upon him who, with the winds of his victoriousness, stirred the fortunes of the Arabs, so that the multitudes of the dynasties of Chosroeses and Caesars[2] were agitated, and by whose sword crowned and enthroned rulers submitted to owners ‖ of sheep and camels. The Arabs proudly rejoiced, their noses in the air, in [18] this great glory[3] and merrily dragged the train of splendid eminence. His birth

1 This title, which is clearly incorrect and has been added by a later copyist, is found in the facsimile edition by Eghbal but has been omitted in the editions of Farrāj (where the title page has *Ṭabaqāt al-shuʿarā'*) and al-Ṭabbāʿ (who adds *al-muḥdathīn*). The following preamble is also clearly inauthentic, on account of its overly flowery style and some other oddities, see the Introduction, pp. 24–25.

1 Reading *zulāzil* (rather than *zalāzil* as in Farrāj's emendation) instead of *dh.lādhil* of the MS.

2 *Al-Akāsirah wa-l-Qayāṣirah*, i.e., the Persian and Roman Emperors. *Akāsirah* is the plural of Kisrā, the Arabic form of Persian Khusraw (Chosroes), *Qayāṣirah* is the plural of Qayṣar (Caesar).

3 The Arabic uses an untranslatable idiom: *ʿaṭasat al-ʿArab ... bi-anf al-ʿizz al-shāmikh* ("the Arabs sneezed with the nose of lofty glory"), as in a verse by Ibn Qanbar al-Māzinī also attributed to Isḥāq al-Mawṣilī (al-Jāḥiẓ, *Burṣān*, 464; al-Qālī, *Dhayl al-Amālī*, 70; *Aghānī*, v, 278).

caused the unbelievers to weep and the fire of Persia to be extinguished[4] and the pillars of the immoral sinners tottered; Chosroes' Portico became a ruin. This was Muḥammad, who was sent to make God's servants ride on the straight path, to convey on behalf of the Creator to all creatures the laws of what is right and the fundaments of what is proper. Blessing and peace, furthermore, upon his kin, who raised the foundations of the houses of religion, whose feet honoured the wooden steps of pulpits and the courtyards of mosques; and on his Companions, the leading men of religion and the chiefs of the people of certitude, the full moons and lamps in the darkness, as long as lightning flashes, doves coo, and clouds' weeping makes meadows laugh.

ʿAbd Allāh[5] ibn al-Muʿtazz bi-llāh ibn al-Mutawakkil ʿalā llāh ibn Muḥammad al-Muʿtaṣim bi-llāh ibn al-Rashīd Hārūn ibn al-Mahdī Muḥammad ibn Abī Jaʿfar al-Manṣūr ʿAbd Allah ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-ʿAbbās (may God be pleased with him), who more than all God's servants needs Him, says:

One night my thoughts fixed my gaze to the stars, on account of a worry that visited me, which wiped the salve of slumber from my eyes, and clothed them in the robes of sleeplessness. I pondered and thought, and then it occurred to me that I should record in a book the poems composed by poets in praise of the caliphs, the viziers, and the military commanders of the Abbasids, so that they would be known among the people, in emulation of what Ibn al-Munajjim[6] did

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Sneezing was considered unlucky by the pre-Islamic Arabs, but the Prophet apparently disagreed (see Lane, *Lexicon*, *ʿṬS*).

4 Among the miracles that accompanied Muḥammad's birth according to Muslim lore were the extinguishing of the holy Zoroastrian fire, which had been burning for a thousand years, and the partial collapse of Īwān Kisrā, "the portico of Chosroes/Khusraw", the famous banqueting hall of the Sasanian emperors at Ctesiphon, their capital on the Tigris S.-E. of Baghdad. Part of it is still standing.

5 The genealogy lists six Abbasid caliphs and ends with the famous ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAbbās, a paternal cousin of the Prophet Muḥammad, and his father ʿAbbās, who gave his name to the dynasty.

6 "Ibn Nujaym" (or Najīm), as in the MS here and on the following page, is clearly a corruption of Ibn al-Munajjim. Abū ʿAbd Allāh Hārūn ibn ʿAlī ibn Yaḥyā (251–288 or 289/865–901 or 902) was a member of a family of scholars and men of letters active for some seven generations at the Abbasid court (on this family see *EI2*, vii, 558–561, "Munadjdjim, Banu 'l-" [M. Fleischhammer]). His book was in fact entitled al-*Bāriʿ* (*The Outstanding* [*book*]), see Sezgin, *Geschichte*, ii, 439, xvi, 217. It was based on a longer book on "modern" poets and the poetry, beginning with Bashshār ibn Burd and ending with Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Malik al-Faqʿasī (d. early 3rd/9th c., see Sezgin, *Geschichte*, ii, 538). Now lost, *al-Bāriʿ* was one of the sources used by Abū l-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī in his *al-Aghānī*. Hārūn's older brother Yaḥyā ibn ʿAlī (d. 300/913) is also credited with a work on poets, *al-Bāhir fī akhbār shuʿarāʾ mukhaḍramī l-dawlatayn* (*The*

before me in his book entitled *The Classes of Reliable Poets* (*Ṭabaqāt al-shuʿarāʾ al-thiqāt*),[7] while I seek support from God who facilitates one's needs. I called my book *The Classes of Theologian-Poets* (*?*) *from among the Early Men of Letters* (*Ṭabaqāt al-shuʿarāʾ al-mutakallimīn min al-udabāʾ al-mutaqaddimīn*).[8] ‖ The [19]
first entry of Ibn al-Munajjim's book was on Bashshār ibn Burd, his poems and the reports about him. I decided to gather all those poets in the present book, thinking that it would be right to be concise, because if I were to include all their poems the book would be too long and overstep its proper measure. Thus I kept it short and mentioned only what is not found in their collected poetry and the poems that are not quoted in other books. I also shortened some of their lengthy poems.

From God one seeks support and success, to Him one resorts and returns. My success will be only through God. On Him one should rely, and it is from Him that one should seek favour. He is sufficient unto me, an excellent Trustee, *an excellent ‖ Patron, and an excellent Helper*.[9]] {2}

Brilliant [*Book*] *on the Poets Straddling the Two Dynasties*); see GAS, ii, 439–440 on these two titles. Although Ibn al-Muʿtazz's *Dīwān* includes a panegyric epigram on Yaḥyā (i, 513) and a few elegies on his father ʿAlī ibn Yaḥyā (ii, 327, 329, 338, 354, 369), it seems that on the whole there was no love lost between Ibn al-Muʿtazz and the Banū l-Munajjim (Osti, *History and Memory*, 69–72; and see al-Tanūkhī, *Faraj*, iv, 110–112, a passage editorially entitled "Ibn al-Muʿtazz wanted to kill Yaḥyā ibn ʿAlī al-Munajjim, but Fate prevented him"); which is perhaps an additional indication that this preamble is spurious.

7 The word *thiqāt* looks like a misguided attempt to make a rhymed title (a characteristic of books from later periods than Ibn al-Muʿtazz's time) and this title is not found elsewhere. Unlike Hadith transmitters, poets are not normally lauded for being reliable or trustworthy.

8 This title, like the one at the beginning of the MS, clearly does not make any sense. The proper title appears in the colophon as *Ṭabaqāt al-shuʿarāʾ al-muḥdathīn* (*The Classes of Modern Poets*).

9 Q al-Anfāl 8:40.

[20] **1 Ibn Harmah**[1]

[He is Ibrāhīm ibn ʿAlī ibn Salamah[2] ibn Harmah al-Qurashī, one of the Banū Qays ibn al-Ḥārith ibn Fihr, who are called al-Khuluj.[3] He was a Hijazi who lived in Medina. His teknonym was Abū Isḥāq. Al-Aṣmaʿī said, "He was the 'seal' of (classical) poets,[4] for he composed panegyrics on the Marwānid rulers but survived until the last days of al-Manṣūr." Among his verses on ʿAbd al-Wāḥid ibn Sulaymān are the following:[5]

When it is asked, "Who is the best to be begged for alms
for the poor and needy of Fihr,
And who spurs on the horses on a day of battle,
bridling them before saddling them?"
Then the women of the Banū Mālik[6]
point at you, before pointing at their spouses.

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1 In the headings of all entries except for the one on Bashshār (§ 2) the name of the poet is preceded by the word *akhbār*, "the reports (on)"; I have ignored it in the translation. The entry on Ibn Harmah is only found in the abridged text (the *Mukhtaṣar*), and therefore put between square brackets. Ibn Harmah, who died at an advanced age c. 176/792, was considered to belong to the "rearguard" of the "classical" or early poets (*sāqat al-shuʿarāʾ*, Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 753). But others place him, with Bashshār ibn Burd, in the vanguard of the "modern" poets, see al-Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān*, i, 51: "Among the *muwalladūn* ('post-classical poets') none used *badīʿ* more correctly than Bashshār and Ibn Harmah". He is therefore a transitional poet who fittingly opens the book. He has entries in Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 753–755; *Aghānī*, iv, 366–397; Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, 503; al-Marzubānī, *Muwashshaḥ*, 349–351 (listed among the *Islāmiyyūn*, not the *muḥdathūn*); al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, vii, 46–50; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, vi, 59–60; and see GAS, ii, 444–445; EAL, 331; EI2, iii, 786. For a detailed study of the expression "rearguard poets" see Alqarni, "Negotiating Abbasid Modernity", in which Ibn Harmah plays a major role.

2 Farrāj adds "ibn ʿĀmir" between brackets (see for instance *Aghānī*, iv, 367 and Ibn al-Kalbī/Caskel, *Ǧamharat an-nasab*, i, Tab. 35). Fihr is the ancestor of Quraysh, the tribe of the Prophet Muḥammad.

3 Or al-Khulj; cf. Lane, *Lexicon* (*KhLJ*): "*Khuluj*: people whose lineage, or origin, is doubted."; Ibn al-Kalbī/Caskel, *Ǧamharat an-nasab*, ii, 348: "al-Ḫulǧ (…) Sie stammen von al-ʿAmāliq, den Amalekiten; also dunkler Herkunft."

4 The same in *Aghānī*, iv, 396, where the saying is attributed to Ibn al-Aʿrābī.

5 He was a son of the Marwānid (Umayyad) caliph Sulaymān ibn ʿAbd al-Malik, see Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh Madīnat Dimashq*, xxxvii, 238–242, where the following verses are quoted p. 239. He was killed in 132/749–750. These verses are also in al-Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān*, iii, 372 and, with more of the same poem, in *Aghānī*, vi, 111–112. The poem, 14 verses, is in Ibn Harmah's *Shiʿr*, 83–86.

6 Mālik ibn Qays ibn Kinānah was the father of Fihr. Instead of Mālik the *Dīwān* has Ghālib, who was the son of Fihr.

He composed many panegyric poems on ʿAbd Allāh ibn Ḥasan ibn Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib and on Ḥasan ibn Zayd (peace be upon them),[7] to whom he devoted his poetry. When Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh[8] rebelled against al-Manṣūr he abstained from following him. One day they said to him, suspecting him to have Shi'ite sympathies, "You said,[9]

> However much I am blamed for loving them,[10]
> I do love the sons of Fāṭimah,
> The descendants of him who brought the Firm Signs,[11] [21]
> the Religion, and the Standard Sunna."

Ibn Harmah replied, "May whoever said this bite his mother's clitoris!"[12] His son said to him, "Daddy, didn't you yourself say this on such-and-such an occasion?" "My boy," said his father, "Which is better, biting my mother's clitoris, or being apprehended by Ibn Qaḥṭabah?"[13]

In a panegyric on al-Ḥakam ibn al-Muṭṭalib he said,[14]

> No blame can be attached to you, except that I
> must come to you, fearful of Fate.

Ibn al-Muʿtazz says:[15] a verse by him that is much appreciated is:[16]

> A man may achieve nobility [though his clothes
> be threadbare and his shirt's collar patched.]

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7 Both were great-grandsons of the fourth calīph, ʿAlī. The former was the leader of the ʿAlids; he died in 144/762, possibly murdered at the orders of al-Manṣūr. (Al-)Ḥasan ibn Zayd ibn al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib died in 167/783.

8 The son of the aforementioned ʿAbd Allāh was nicknamed al-Nafs al-Zakiyyah, "the Pure Soul". He rebelled together with his brother Ibrāhīm in Medina; he was killed in 145/762.

9 Ibn Harmah, *Shiʿr*, 214.

10 I prefer to read *ḥubbihim* (as in *Aghānī*, iv, 387 and other sources) instead of *ḥubbihī* ("loving him") as in the editions and the *Mukhtaṣar*. The "sons of Fāṭimah" are the ʿAlids.

11 *Al-muḥkamāt*, see Q Āl ʿImrān 3:7, a passage of Qur'anic self-description.

12 On this rather common insult, see Nawas, "Sucker of One's Mother's Clitoris".

13 Al-Ḥasan ibn Qaḥṭabah ibn Shabīb al-Ṭāʾī (d. 181/797 at an advanced age) was, with his father, among the leading military commanders of the Abbasids.

14 Ibn Harmah, *Shiʿr*, 149. Al-Ḥakam ibn al-Muṭṭalib ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Muṭṭalib al-Qurashī al-Makhzūmī was a pious man known for his liberality; see al-Balādhurī, *Jumal*, x, 226–230, al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xiii, 123–124.

15 It is not uncommon for an author to be mentioned by name in his own book. For other instances, see below, pp. 258, 260.

16 Ibn Harmah, *Shiʿr*, 143, in a poem of twelve verses. The verse is quoted in many sources. The parenthesized words were added by Farrāj.

2 Bashshār ibn Burd[1]

He was an excellent, outstanding, and witty[2] poet. He was in the service of rulers and was present at the courts of caliphs, taking his rewards from them. He composed panegyrics on al-Mahdī in his presence and he was on familiar terms with him. The caliph allowed him to be close to him and bestowed ample gifts on him. He had a pleasant voice and was a good boon companion. When al-Mahdī was sitting together with his concubines he would send for him, so that they could spend an evening in pleasant conversation. Bashshār was counted among the eloquent orators who spoke correct Arabic and he composed numerous long and short poems. Someone who hated him denounced him to al-Mahdī, accusing him of adhering to the religion of the Khārijites, and al-Mahdī had him killed.[3] But it is also said that al-Mahdī was told that Bashshār had lampooned him, upon which he had him killed. Truthful reports on the killing of Bashshār, however, say that he used to compose panegyrics on al-Mahdī and that the latter bestowed favours on him. But then he was accused of heresy and al-Mahdī had him killed. He was allegedly given seventy lashes, after which he died, but others say that he was beheaded. His death occurred in the year 167, or 168 according to others, during the reign of al-Mahdī.

[22] After he had died, al-Mahdī thought of him and his pleasant conviviality. He had been an intimate companion, the Caliph had admired him and his poetry, and he had made him close to himself. Bashshār had been blind for forty years before his death,[4] which was why he could be present when al-Mahdī had his

1 Often called "the father of the modern poets" (*abū l-muḥdathīn*), Bashshār ibn Burd is among the most famous poets and the first important non-Arab poet; he boasts of his Persian ancestry in several poems. He was killed, some seventy years old, in 167/784 or 168/785. There are entries on him in Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 757–760; al-Iṣfahānī, *Aghānī*, iii, 134–250; Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, i, 502; al-Marzubānī, *Muwashshaḥ*, 384–390; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, vii, 610–617; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, i, 271–274; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, x, 135–141; idem, *Nakt al-himyān*, 125–130; Ibn Faḍl Allāh, *Masālik* (ed. al-Jubūrī), xiv, 339–348; Ibn Nubātah, *Sarḥ al-ʿUyun*, 298–310 (ed. & tr. Webb, 370–387); and see *GAS*, ii, 455–457, ix, 288; *EAL*, 138–139 (J.S. Meisami); *EI2*, i, 1080–1082 (R. Blachère); Cooperson & Toorawa (eds), *Arabic Literary Culture*, 91–97 (Geert Jan van Gelder); Almallah, "Parody and the Creation of the *Muḥdath Ghazal*".

2 *Ẓarīf* has several meanings, including "of refined behaviour, elegant".

3 For various accounts of Bashshār's death see Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 760, *Aghānī*, iii, 243–250. Whatever was the cause, it was certainly not his adherence to the "religion of the Khārijites"; *al-khawārij* is possibly a corruption of *al-zanādiqah*, the "heretics" (often those with Manichaean leanings), mentioned below and in other sources. Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, ii, 404 lists him among poets who secretly adhered to *zandaqah*.

4 Bashshār was born c. 95/714 and therefore around seventy when he died. Other sources say that he was born blind (*Aghānī*, iii, 141–142). The "forty years" may be connected with the anecdote told below.

concubines with him, because he could not see them. It is related[5] that after al-Mahdī had Bashshār killed he repented killing him and wished he could find something that could be imputed to him. He sent for his writings and when these were brought to him, he gave orders that they be searched, hoping to find something that might justify his anger with him. But no such thing was found. When he saw a sealed papyrus scroll, he suspected that it might contain something of the kind, and he ordered it to be unrolled. This was written in it:

> In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. I wanted to lampoon the family of Sulaymān ibn ʿAlī ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-ʿAbbās.[6] But then I remembered their close kinship with God's messenger (God bless and preserve him) and his family, which prevented me from lampooning them. So I left their offence to God Almighty to judge and I composed two verses in which I do not impugn their honour nor malign their religion:[7]
>
> The dinar and the dirham of Sulaymān's family
> are like the two Babylonians, held fast by evil demons:
> They are never found and one cannot hope to meet them,
> just as what you heard about Hārūt and Mārūt.[8]

Then al-Mahdī said, "Now, I swear to God, repentance is proper!"

Abū Jaʿfar related to me: Ibn Abī Aflaḥ said to me:[9] A man said to Bashshār, "Whenever God Almighty robs someone of his precious eyes, He always gives compensation in the form of a pleasant voice or intelligence. So what compensation has He given you?" Bashshār replied, "He has compensated me by making me unable to see a whoreson like you for forty years".

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5 See the account in *Aghānī*, iii, 249.

6 *Aghānī*, iii, 249 adds "because of their miserliness". This Sulaymān was a paternal uncle of al-Mahdī's father al-Manṣūr; he died 142/759. For Bashshār's poem in praise of a singing girl (*qaynah*) belonging to a son of Sulaymān, who rewarded him with two thousand dinars, see *Aghānī*, iii, 165–166.

7 Bashshār, *Dīwān*, ii, 42; Ibn Abī ʿAwn, *Tashbīhāt*, 268; *Aghānī*, iii, 249. One could argue, however, that accusing them of miserliness does impugn their honour. The verses are not in the shorter account in al-Mubarrad, *Kāmil*, iii, 34 (they were added in some manuscripts).

8 Hārūt and Mārūt, mentioned in the Qur'an (Q al-Baqarah 2:102), were two angels who were sent down to Babylon (Bābil) after they had claimed they would not, like humans, be tempted to sin. They were wrong and suffer eternal punishment.

9 For another version of this anecdote see *Aghānī*, iii, 167–168. Notes about the author's informants will be given only when they are important.

Al-Sidrī said: My paternal uncle Bashshār was one of the most learned
[23] people and most knowledgeable about God's Book, ‖ but when he became on intimate terms with some Ḥarrānians his religion became bad.[10] He was a versatile and outstanding person. His status as a poet was unequalled; but he would say, "Of all things I know about, poetry is the least." Ibn Abī Aflaḥ related to me: Abū Ḥātim al-Sijistānī[11] told me: "Abū ʿUbaydah[12] was once asked, while I was present, about Bashshār's poetry. 'A bit of gold, a bit of manure', he replied."[13] He also said, Once, during the days of his caliphate, al-Mahdī went to visit his concubines, who had gathered in the apartment of one of them. He sat down with them and had a drink. They said to him, "Would you allow Bashshār to join us, to spend the evening in pleasant conversation?" He could talk better than anyone, he was the wittiest of all, with the most pleasantries. The Caliph summoned him, the women gathered round him, and he talked to them, telling
{3} them anecdotes and pleasantries ‖ and reciting some choice bits of his poetry. They were much pleased and said to him, "If only you were our father! Then we would not part from you ever!" "Yes," he answered, "And me being of Chosroes' religion!"[14] Al-Mahdī laughed and gave orders for Bashshār to be given a reward.

One day[15] al-Mahdī saw one of his concubines who was naked, washing herself. She heard him and she drew her thighs together, covering her thing with

10 Ḥarrān, ancient Carrhae, in Syria was the centre of an old syncretistic religion that could survive for some time because the adherents called themselves Sabians (*Ṣābiʾūn*), as if they were the Mandaeans also called thus and whose religion was tolerated in Islam. See *EI2*, viii, 675–678, "Ṣābiʾa" (T. Fahd).

11 Sahl ibn Muḥammad Abū Ḥātim al-Sijistānī (d. 255/869) was a prominent philologist.

12 Abū ʿUbaydah (d. 209/824–825) was one of the most important philologists.

13 The text has *shadhrah wa-nuqrah*, "a bit of gold and a bit of silver", but I prefer to read *baʿrah* instead of *nuqrah* (the words are easily confused in writing), in view of similar utterances about various people, e.g. *yakhliṭu l-durrah bi-l-baʿrah* ("he mixes a pearl with piece of dung", al-Tawḥīdī, *Imtāʿ*, i, 33, on Ibn al-Khammār), *nuqaṭ ʿarūs wa-abʿār ẓibāʾ* ("a bride's beauty spots and antelopes' dung", said of Dhū l-Rummah's poetry, al-Marzubānī, *Muwashshaḥ*, 270–272). Compare, on Bashshār: "The quality of his poetry varies: most is on a high level, but he descends steeply in a little" (Ibn Sharaf, *Masāʾil al-intiqād*, ed. Pellat, 84). Abū Ḥātim al-Sijistānī praises his poetry but adds, "but there are many faults in his poetry" (Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān*, i, 15).

14 i.e., one of the Zoroastrians, who condoned (and in their ancient writings recommended) marriage between father and daughter or between brother and sister. The anecdote is also in al-Ḥuṣrī, *Zahr*, 475, idem, *Jamʿ al-jawāhir*, 343.

15 The following unlikely anecdote and the poem are often quoted, e.g. in al-Thaʿālibī, *Khāṣṣ al-khāṣṣ*, 157. For a different version see al-Iṣfahānī, *Aghānī*, iii, 230–231, also in Ibn Ẓāfir al-Azdī, *Badāʾiʿ al-badāʾih*, 109–110, Ibn Faḍl Allāh, *Masālik al-abṣār* (ed. al-Jubūrī), xiv, 341–

both her hands—they could not even contain it, so she bent over ‖ and covered [24]
it with the folds of her belly. Al-Mahdī left, laughing. Finding Bashshār in the palace, he said to him, "Complete this verse:

My eyes saw (it's my death!) …"

Bashshār responded *ex tempore* with

… a sight fit to disgrace me:
She hid it when she saw me
under the palms of her hands,
But still some of it showed,
not concealed by hands,
So she bent over until it was concealed
by ample belly folds.

Al-Mahdī exclaimed, "You're a wizard! If you weren't blind I would have your head cut off! You have described the matter exactly as if you had seen it. But I know this is because you are so very clever and intelligent."

Bashshār was a *mawlā*[16] of the Banū ʿUqayl, or according to others, the Banū Sadūs. His nickname was al-Muraʿath, which means "He with the earring", because *riʿāth* means "earring" (*qurṭ*). He was accused of being a heretic.[17] But he said:[18]

342. Instead of al-Mahdī, his concubine, and Bashshār, some other sources mention Hārūn al-Rashīd, his wife Zubaydah, and Abū Nuwās. See Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān*, v, 277, 488, and several other sources, including *The Thousand and One Nights* (references in Marzolph & van Leeuwen, *The Arabian Nights Encyclopedia*, i, 203–204). See, for instance, Lyons's translation, *The Arabian Nights*, ii, 186–187; cf. also Chraïbi, "Classification", pp. 48–52 ("la concubine surprise au bain"), Wagner, *Abū Nuwās in der Nebenüberlieferung*, 206–207. The epigram, with its specific motif ("girl with ample *pudendum* unable to hide it with her hand"), seems like a translation of an epigram by the Greek poet Rufinus found in the *Greek Anthology* (v, 60, cf. Rufinus, *The Epigrams*, no. xxi, p. 60), but the "Susanna bathing" topos is of course much older.

16 "Client" or "freedman"; non-Arabs in early Islam needed an affiliation with an Arab tribe, clan, or prominent person, in order to have a place in high society.

17 On this "heresy", *zandaqah*, see *EI2*, xi, 510–513, "Zindīḳ" (F. de Blois). Systematic persecution began in 163/779 at the order of al-Mahdī. *Zandaqah* specifically may refer to Manichaean beliefs (going back to the Persian Mani/Manes in the third century AD), but it is often used more loosely for any heresy. I translate it therefore simply as "heresy" and *zindīq* (pl. *zanādiqah*) as "heretic(s)".

18 Also in al-Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān*, iii, 197; Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 757; al-Ḥuṣrī, *Zahr*, 474.

How can he weep, held up by abandoned traces,
who will weep, held up at for lengthy Day?
Resurrection and Reckoning will surely distract him
from stopping at traces, years old, of an abode.

These two verses show that he sincerely believed in the Resurrection. He was a natural talent, devoid of artificiality; he was the master of the modern poets and their chief, no one can be given precedence to him, nobody can keep up with him. Those who know the truth say that al-Mahdī had him killed because he had lampooned his vizier, Yaʿqūb ibn Dāwūd with these verses:[19]

[25] Umayyads, wake up! You have slept long enough already.
The caliph is now Yaʿqūb ibn Dāwūd.
Your caliphate has been lost, men! Seek
your caliph, God's deputy, between wineskin and lute![20]

Some people say that the Caliph had him killed because of the following verses:[21]

Never despair when a chaste, secluded woman
says harsh, ugly words!
Women who are hard to get will become easy;
what was difficult becomes possible, after defiance.

Al-Mahdī said, "You have accused all women on earth of being unchaste!" But the reason given before is better attested.

Ḥammād ʿAjrad would lampoon Bashshār, but the latter never paid attention to this, until Ḥammād said,[22]

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19 Al-Jahshiyārī, *Wuzarāʾ*, 159; Ibn Abī Ṭāhir Ṭāyfūr, *Baghdād*, 269; al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, III, i, 508, *Aghānī*, iii, 243, 245 and many later sources; Bashshār, *Dīwān*, iii, 91 (preceded by four more verses; cf. the similar verses iii, 100). Abū ʿAbd Allāh Yaʿqūb ibn Dāwūd (d. 186/802) was appointed vizier in 163/779–780. For some three years he dominated the caliphate (al-Jahshiyārī, *Wuzarāʾ*, 157, Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, vii, 21), but eventually he was deposed and imprisoned.

20 There is a modern tendency to translate *ʿūd* as "oud"; but the differences between the Arab instrument and the western lute (a word derived from *al-ʿūd*) are insignificant compared, for instance, with those between European poetry and Arabic *shiʿr*, normally rendered as "poetry".

21 Bashshār, *Dīwān*, ii, 72 *Aghānī*, iii, 209, 221, 241.

22 Ḥammād ʿAjrad (d. between 155/772 and 168/784) has an entry below, §8 (and see also

You uglier than a monkey,
when the monkey is blind!

He was also hurt by the following verses by Ḥammād:[23]

If his skin were daubed with ambergris
his skin would make the ambergris stink.
Or, if it were daubed with fragrant musk,
the musk would turn into shit.

Ḥammād was an outstanding, excellent poet, but he does not come anywhere near Bashshār. Among the good poetry by Bashshār are his verses on ʿUmar ibn al-ʿAlāʾ:[24]

If the warring of enemies keeps you awake,
wake up ʿUmar, then sleep!
[I was summoned to ʿUmar by his generosity,
when the tribe said, "He's a vast sea!"]
If it wasn't for what they asserted, I would not
praise a fragrant herb before smelling it.

One day Bashshār attended a gathering presided by ʿUqbah ibn Salm al-Hināʾī.[25] Also present was ʿUqbah ibn Ruʾbah ibn al-ʿAjjāj, who recited a poem in *rajaz* metre.[26] When Bashshār expressed his appreciation, ʿUqbah said, "Abū

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§ 8a), where the following verse is quoted again. It is also in al-Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān*, i, 30; idem, *Ḥayawān*, iv, 66, vi, 228; Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 758; *Aghānī*, xiv, 329.

23 Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥayawān*, i, 239 (preceded by three more verses); Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 758; *Aghānī*, xiv, 331; also below, p. 100. The verses may have been inspired by the converse motif in Bashshār's verse on a woman: "If you held an onion near her | the onion smell would be vanquished by musk" (al-ʿAskarī, *Ṣināʿatayn*, 122 and cf. al-Marzubānī, *Muwashshaḥ*, 386, 390).

24 ʿUmar ibn al-ʿAlāʾ was a military commander. The verses are in Bashshār's *Dīwān*, iv, 182, 181; Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 758; idem, *ʿUyūn*, iii, 134, 167; idem, *Maʿārif*, 293; *Aghānī*, iii, 193; al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, III, i, 136 (year 141/759–760); Qudāmah, *Naqd al-shiʿr*, 41, 81; and many other sources. Vs. 2 is supplied from the *Mukhtaṣar* (ed. Farrāj, p. 429).

25 ʿUqbah ibn Salm was governor of Basra under al-Manṣūr. The anecdote is in al-Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān*, i, 49–50; Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 757–758; *Aghānī*, iii, 174–175. On the anecdote and the poem see also Montgomery, "Listening for the Poem", 25–33; Alqarni, "Negotiating Abbasid Modernity", 99; Nasser, "Bashshār b. Burd's Double Entendre".

26 No poetry by ʿUqbah is preserved, in contrast to that of his father Ruʾbah (d. 145/762) and grandfather al-ʿAjjāj (d. c. 90/709), both of whom were famous *rajaz* poets (Sezgin, *GAS*, ii,

{4} Muʿādh,[27] this is a form that you ‖ and poets like you do not master!" Angrily, Bashshār replied, "You say this to me of all people? I swear to God, I am a better *rajaz* poet than you, your father, and your grandfather!" The following day he presented to ʿUqbah ibn Salm al-Hināʾī his *rajaz* poem with rhyme letter D,[28] in which he says,[29]

O remnants of the abode in Dhāt al-Ṣamd:
I adjure you by God, tell me how you fared after I left!

[26] In it he also says,

A free man is rebuked, a stick is for the slave;
There's nothing like refusal for the importunate beggar.
Many a "friend" was like a suppurating boil
That I had to carry on a patch of skin …

ʿUqbah liked the poem. He said to Ruʾbah's son, "I swear to God, you, your father, or your grandfather never composed anything like it!" He rewarded Bashshār with an ample gift. Bashshār was the unchallenged master poet of his time. People would gather to him, reciting their poems to him, and be content with his judgement. Despite being blind, unable to see anything, his similes are better than anyone else's. For example:

The dust cloud, raised above our heads, joined
with our swords, is like a night with shooting stars.[30]

Among his vicious invective are these verses:[31]

366–369). The *rajaz* metre is relatively simple; verses are usually half the length of verses in other metres, which results in a greater density of rhyme.

27 Abū Muʿādh is Bashshār's teknonym (*kunyah*).

28 Poems with monorhyme are customarily referred to by the rhyme consonant. All verses of the following poem end in *-dī*, hence it is called a *dāliyyah*, a poem with rhyme letter D (*dāl*).

29 For the poem see his *Dīwān*, ii, 156–171 (164 verses); *Aghānī* quotes 51 verses. The verse "A free man …" is very often quoted.

30 Another very often quoted verse, from a long poem; Bashshār, *Dīwān*, i, 335; and e.g. Ibn Abī ʿAwn, *Tashbīhāt*, 153; Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 754; idem, *ʿUyūn*, ii, 190; *Aghānī*, iv, 143, 196; al-Jurjānī, *Asrār*, 159, 173, 183, 185; see also below.

31 Al-Mubarrad, *Kāmil*, ii, 22; Ibn al-Muʿtazz, *Badīʿ*, 61; Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 759; idem, *ʿUyūn*, i, 88–89 (ascribing them to Bishr ibn Marwān); Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, iii, 215; and many later sources, often as an example of *istiṭrād*, "feint", or an invective aside (Ibn al-Muʿtazz,

Be not miserly like Ibn Qazʿah, who is
distressed, fearing he will be called upon.
When you come to him for a favour he shuts the door;
you will only find him in his hiding place.
Ask Abū Yaḥyā: When will you achieve loftiness
while you swear an oath whenever a favour is asked?

On him he also says,[32]

By your fortune,[33] Ibn Qazʿah, you have come into wealth!
Well, base people tend to be fortunate.
Fearing to raise your bid too high [27]
you added a chicken, among those at the auction.[34]

The following poem by Bashshār is much admired, on account of its fine composition and the beautiful descriptions; it contains the verse with the simile that we quoted above. It begins:[35]

His friend became unfriendly and turned away, bored by him;
it disgraced him to be always accompanied by him.
My two friends,[36] do not condemn the burning passion

---

in his *Badīʿ*, calls it *khurūj*). Nothing more is known about Abū l-Mughīrah ʿUbayd Allāh ibn Qazʿah. The verses are also sometimes ascribed to Diʿbil (Ibn Rashīq, *ʿUmdah*, ii, 40). The identity of Abū Yaḥyā is unknown; Ibn Khallikān. *Wafayāt*, ii, 211 says he is Ḥammād ʿAjrad, but his teknonym is not Abū Yaḥyā but Abū ʿUmar.

32 Bashshār, *Dīwān*, iii, 22, in a long poem; al-Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥayawān*, ii, 332; Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 759.

33 *Bi-jaddika* is ambiguous: either "(I adjure you) by your grandfather!" or "by your (good) fortune", see Lane, *Lexicon*.

34 I follow the interpretation offered by Farrāj. Al-Jāḥiẓ quotes the verses in evidence of the small worth of a chicken.

35 Ibn al-Muʿtazz quotes parts of a longer poem (Bashshār, *Dīwān*, i, 323–340, with 83 verses), an ode dedicated to Marwān ibn Muḥammad ibn Marwān, the last Umayyad caliph, who was killed in 132/750 (he is not mentioned here by the Abbasid prince-anthologist, who is probably unwilling to quote praise on an Umayyad killed by an ancestor of his); it also glorifies Qays ʿAylān, the large tribal grouping of the "Northern Arabs" to which Bashshār was connected as a *mawlā*. The poem is discussed in Blachère, "Le cas Baššār", 592–594. The first ten verses are in Roman, *Baššār et son expérience courtoise*, 66–69, with French translation; for another English translation of vss. 5–10 see Beeston, *Selections from the poetry of Baššār*, 43–44. Parts of the poem are in *Aghānī*, iii, 142, 154, 197–199, 236–237. The numerous variants will not be discussed unless relevant.

36 Addressing two companions, usually unnamed, at the beginning of a *qaṣīdah* is a convention going back to the earliest known pre-Islamic poems.

or a grieving man's pain, whose loved ones have gone far away![37]
But his soul was cured by what his eyes saw in ʿAbdah[38]
and what his heart and his nature found in her.
He refrained from what his heart urged,
but past[39] passion took him away and pursued him.
If your friend often tastes passion,
its steeds turning him in every direction,
Then leave to him the way of parting, and do not be
the mount of someone who travels often on many paths.
Your friend is he who, if you fill him with suspicion, says, "Rather,
I gave cause for suspicion!", and who, if you reproach him, is lenient.[40]
If you reproach your friend in every matter,
you will never find anyone you will not reproach.[41]
So live alone or be on good terms with your friend, who will
at times commit wrongdoing, or sometimes avoid it.
If you do not at times drink though there's some dirt in the cup,
you will end up thirsty. Who is there whose drink is ever limpid?
[...][42] From that tribe: Qays, Qays ʿAylān, for they are
the sources of generosity that fill the clouds with rain.
There is always one of them[43] who holds a city,
watching over it, or an outpost where foreign margraves[44] are feared.

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37 *Shaṭṭat* can also mean "have been unjust" (cf. Roman's translation), but in similar contexts "to be remote" seems to be the more common sense.

38 Bashshār's many poems about ʿAbdah have been collected and translated by Roman, *Bašš̆ār et son expérience courtoise*.

39 Instead of *amsu l-hawā* (Farrāj) or *amsā l-hawā* (as in the MS), the editor of the *Dīwān* prefers reading *massu l-hawā*, "the madness of passion", which is probably better (cf. *Dīwān*, ii, 74: *wa-jaziʿtu min massi l-hawā*).

40 See Beeston's commentary on this verse.

41 This and the following two verses served as the lyrics of a song by Abū l-ʿUbays ibn Ḥamdūn (*Aghānī*, iii, 237).

42 The quoted passage jumps, without warning, from vs. 10 to vs. 43 followed by 54–55, 59, 61, 64–65, 67, which somewhat obscures the "fine composition" claimed for the poem. In vs. 42, not quoted here, the poet addresses Marwān, recommending to him "a dependable man with useful qualities".

43 The *Dīwān* has "from us".

44 *Marāzib* is the plural of *marzubān*, from Persian *marz-pān*, "frontier-protector". The first syllable of "margrave" is etymologically related to *marz-* (cf. "march, mark", meaning "border").

Whenever a tyrant king disdainfully turns his cheek, [28]
we march to him with our swords to reprove him.[45]
Whenever the enemy creeps up to make us angry
and heeds us, apparently, we do not heed them.
We meet them openly, with straight lances {5}
and gleaming swords that, striking, quench themselves with blood.
The dust cloud, raised above our heads, joined
with our swords, is like a night with shooting stars.
A massive army, its bright iron obscuring the sun,
its battalions dazzling the eyes of ironclad fighters:
The wide earth is choked with it when it marches.
its flanks pressing on the sides of mountains.
There we left Kalb and Qaḥṭān,[46] who wished they had someone to protect
them from being killed by the cavalry that sheds blood with impunity.[47]

Bashshār is counted also among the eloquent orators.[48] I do not know anyone among scholars or men of understanding who denies his excellence or dislikes his poetry. His poetry is purer than wine,[49] more limpid than glass, and

45 Perhaps this seemingly mild wording is meant as a metaphor with ironical sense (*isti'ārah tahakkumiyyah*, thus according to the commentary in al-Marṣafī, *Wasīlah*, ii, 23), but instead of *nu'ātibuh* the original may well have been *nu'āqibuh* ("to punish him"), which sounds stronger and does not again repeat the verb "reprove" already used in vss. 1 (*yu'ātibuh*) and 8 (*tu'ātibuh*).

46 Kalb ibn Wabarah, a Northern Arab tribe, had been allied with the Umayyads but some of them defected to the Abbasids during Marwān's reign (*EI2*, iv, 493, in the entry "Kalb b. Wabara" [A.A. Dixon]). Qaḥṭān stands for the "Southern Arabs". The distinction made by the genealogists between "Northern" and "Southern" tribes refers to their supposed origins in the remote past, not to actual geographical location.

47 Reading, with the *Dīwān*, *mina l-qatli l-muṭilli maqānibuh*. which I find slightly less difficult to understand than *mina l-habli l-muṭalli mughālibuh*.

48 Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān*, i, 49: *Kāna Bashshār shā'iran rājizan wa-sajjā'an khaṭīban wa-ṣāḥib manthūr wa-muzdawij wa-lahū rasā'il ma'rūfah*, "Bashshār was a poet who also composed *rajaz* poems, an orator who employed rhymed prose, one who produced prose and paired rhyme, and he also composed well-known epistles."

49 The text has *anqā min al-rāḥah*, an expression found, e.g., in *taraktuhū anqā min al-rāḥah* (Lane, *Lexicon*, RWḤ: *"I left him, or it, more clear than the court, open area, or yard*, [of a house,] or *than the palm of the hand*, meaning, *without anything*"), which does not fit here. I have taken *rāḥah* to stand for *rāḥ*, a common word for wine, which is often described as pure. This also suits the following "glass" and "sweet water".

smoother on the tongue than sweet water. Some verses by him that are considered beautiful—though all his verse is in fact beautiful—are the following:[50]

Is it because your beloved, angry, has wronged you
that you are now in death's agonies, drunk?
You know no sleep, from yearning for Shajan[51]
—as if you think other people have no worries!
I love someone who grants me nothing
but a greeting that leaves my heart bewildered.
People! My ears are in love with someone in the neighbourhood[52]
(sometimes the ear falls in love before the eye).
[Would that I were an apple cut in halves,
or that I were a sprig of sweet basil,
And that, when she inhaled my smell, pleased with it,
and we were alone, I would be changed into a human again!
Don't blame me, for thinking of her intoxicates me.
Would virtuous people blame an intoxicated man?]

[29] This is an original motif, never used by anyone before him.[53] It is taken from a longer poem, but as we said in the introduction to this book, we aim at brevity and concision. Another unprecedented motif in his verse that is also admired is the following:[54]

My night was not long, yet I did not sleep:
a phantom that visited me drove slumber from me.[55]

50 Vs. 4 of this fragment is found in a poem of 16 verses on an unnamed singing-girl (*qaynah*) in *Aghānī*, iii, 150; see also ibid., vi, 242; al-Ṣūlī, *Akhbār Abī Tammām* (Gruendler), 244–245; al-Ḥuṣrī, *Zahr*, 193; Bashshār, *Dīwān*, iv, 217–218, 228, 245; Beeston, *Selections*, 19; Roman, *Baššār*, 200–201. Vss. 5–7 are taken from the *Mukhtaṣar* (ed. Farrāj, p. 429).

51 The verse puns on the meanings of *shajan*, "twig" or "worry", here a girl's name.

52 In an urban context (as possibly here) *ḥayy* means "quarter, neighbourhood", in a Bedouin context it is "tribe" (thus in Beeston's translation).

53 This remark probably refers to vs. 3, judging by the countless quotations in later sources.

54 *Aghānī*, iii, 151 (vs. 1 with four more verses), similarly vi, 250–251; Bashshār, *Dīwān*, iv, 187; Beeston, *Selections*, 1 (Arabic), 19–20 (translation); Roman, *Baššār*, 218–221. Vss. 4–6 and the following comment are taken from the *Mukhtaṣar* (ed. Farrāj, 429). They have not been found elsewhere.

55 A variation on the common theme of the phantom (*ṭayf*, *khayāl*) of the beloved that appears in a dream or daydream. The verse has been criticised (al-Jurjānī, *Wasāṭah*, 442): "An apparition only visits someone who sleeps."

Now abandon, O abandoned one, your yearning
for seeing her, except in dreams!
Tell me about a letter you sent to me,
blaming me, though I have never been blamed!
[Have you become a pious reader of the Qur'an, despite my passion for you?
Or did you imagine that my skin was bitten by ticks?
Do you reject me after you made me fall in love?
Why is that, apple of my eye, and wherefore?
May God see to it that I make you pleased with me,
and then I shall not please those who dislike my love of you.

These verses, as you see, are more delicate than a soft wind and sweeter than fresh water. It is, moreover, as if he plays with poetry, because of his fine natural talent, his accessible style, his easy diction, together with the novel motifs such as other poets fall short of.]

Among his verse that is admired there is a wonderful poem with rhyme letter R, which contains original motifs and sublime constructions:[56]

I saw my companions in Khunāṣirāt,[57]
on their mounts, when the sun was high in the sky,
And my heart, transported to them,
from my longstanding love, almost flew up.
There is, among the tribe I saw, a young woman,
captivating when flirting, companiable yet coy,
With cool teeth, as if her mouth,
shortly after sleep, had drunk wine.[58]

56 Vss. 5, 6, 8 in Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 759–760 (with two more verses); al-Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥayawān*, v, 241; al-Mubarrad, *Kāmil*, ii, 354. They are also in a poem of 74 verses in Bashshār's *Dīwān*, iii, 223–233 (appearing as vss. 6–7, 14 of that poem). See Beeston, *Selections*, 28. Vss. 2–5, 7 are in *Dīwān*, iv, 87–88. Vss. 1–4, 7 are found, with some variants, in a poem of 32 verses by Jirān al-ʿAwd (1st /7th century) in Ibn Maymūn, *Muntahā l-ṭalab*, i, 100–101, Jirān al-ʿAwd, *Dīwān*, 43–46.

57 The normal form is Khunāṣirah, a place in Syria, near Qinnasrīn, according to Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, s.v, where a variant of this verse is quoted and attributed to Jirān al-ʿAwd. This is one of many verses where the blind poet refers to seeing; on which see Ghédira, "La fréquence du mot *ʿayn*/œil dans les poèmes de Baššār l'aveugle".

58 Reading *ʿātiqatun*, as suggested by Farrāj and also found in *Muntahā l-ṭalab*, instead of *ʿānaqahū*.

It is as if his[59] heart is a bouncing ball, for fear
of being separated from her (as if fear would be of any use).
He is terrified by any secret whispering,
fearing the secret whispers should be about him.
He wishes that one more night were added to this night,
and that no dawn for it were created.
My eye is unwilling to close and sleep: it seems
as if its eyelids were too short for it.

I have been informed that Muslim ibn al-Walīd[60] and some others, among them Abū l-Shīṣ[61] and Abū Nuwās,[62] were in the presence of one of the caliphs, who
[30] asked them about a kind of poetry with an evenly patterned texture. ‖ They recited to him poems by a number of early and modern poets, but it seemed that the caliph did not hear what he had in mind, for he asked for something better. Then Abū Nuwās said, "I know, Commander of the Faithful!", and he recited those verses with rhyme letter R by Bashshār. The caliph liked them very much.[63]

Among his excellent hyperbolic vaunting verses are the following:[64]

{6} Whenever we are angry in the Muḍarī[65] manner,
we rend the sun's veil, or it will rain blood.[66]
Whenever we lend a tribal chief the top of a pulpit,
he blesses us, wishing us salvation.[67]

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59 The shift from the first-person singular to the third is unusual; the first person returns in the last verse. The confusion is partly due to the muddled transmission.

60 See the entry on him, § 37.

61 See the entry on him, § 9.

62 See the entry on him, § 33.

63 I have ignored the following *wa-qāla*, "and he said". Farrāj thinks the subject could be either the caliph or Abū Nuwās, but I think it is more likely either an intrusion that should be deleted or a sign that there is a lacuna in the text.

64 Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 760; *Aghānī*, iii, 162. According to al-Āmidī (*Muʾtalif*, 93) the first verse was stolen by Bashshār from a poem by al-Quḥayf ibn Khumayr al-ʿUqaylī (d. after 132/750); see al-Quḥayf al-ʿUqaylī, *Shiʿr*, 251.

65 Muḍar (in Arab genealogy the father of ʿAylān and grandfather of Qays) is another common way of referring to the "Northern Arabs".

66 The sun (*shams* being feminine in Arabic) is metaphorically turned into a woman. Ibn Nāqiyā, *Jumān*, 394 interprets the verse as follows: "It means: We fill the earth with horse and men and stir it up as if rending it, which is meant by 'we rend the sun's veil', because the sun's veil (*ḥijāb al-shams*) is the earth; that the earth is meant is shown by 'or it drips [reading *qaṭarat* instead of *tumṭira*] blood', so that he combines heaven and earth." See the similar explanation in al-Marzūqī, *Azminah*, 282.

67 *Ṣallā ʿalaynā wa-sallamā*: perhaps blasphemously, such a chief is said to use the formula

Admired, too, are the verses on ʿUqbah ibn Salm:[68]

Convey my greetings, my two companions, to Umm al-ʿAlāʾ,
but beware the glance of her black-and-white eyes!
In those eyes lies remedy and sickness alike
for a lover (the sickness coming before the remedy).
She tormented me with my love of her—may God torment her
with all the passions she desires!
[…][69] Birds alight where they can pick up grains,
and the dwellings of the noble are frequented.
The only ambitions of that generous man Ibn Salm are
giving, riding in procession, or meeting in battle.[70]
He does not give to you out of hope or fear,
but because he relishes the taste of giving.
[He is a liberal man: one of his hands gives favours like rain,
the other deals out poison to his enemies.]

Among his choice panegyric verse is the following on Ibn al-ʿAlāʾ:[71]

A man who never sleeps on a grudge;
he never licks honey except with poison.[72]

Then he turns to vaunting:

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normally reserved for blessing the Prophet Muhammad: "God bless him and grant him salvation" (*ṣallā llāhu ʿalayhi wa-sallam*).

68 All verses except l. 3 are in a poem of 54 verses in Bashshār, *Dīwān*, i, 132–138 (where they are vss. 1–2, 34, 36, 35, 38); vs. 3 is found in al-Ḥuṣrī, *Jamʿ al-jawāhir*, 348. See also *Aghānī*, iii, 189, 194. For a study of this poem see Meisami, "The Uses of the *Qaṣīda*"; for a partial translation of the poem see Beeston, *Selections*, 66–68. The last verse quoted here is taken from the *Mukhtaṣar* (ed. Farrāj, p. 430).

69 Ibn al-Muʿtazz skips some thirty verses and the following verses are in praise of ʿUqbah.

70 Instead of *wa-mawkabin aw liqāʾī* all other sources have *wa-markabin li-l-liqāʾī* ("and riding into a battle-meeting"), which may be the better reading. Beeston has "a battle-steed" but I have taken *markab* as a verbal noun, parallel with *ʿaṭāʾ*, "giving".

71 On this and the following three verses, see Bashshār, *Dīwān*, iv, 182, 179; Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, v, 505 (anonymously); al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, i, 281; Qudāmah ibn Jaʿfar, *Naqd*, 41; *Aghānī*, iii, 193; al-ʿAskarī, *Dīwān al-maʿānī*, i, 60.

72 The sense is that he will not sleep until he has settled his grudge (or has taken revenge, *thaʾr*, as in some sources). Instead of "poison" (*samm*) all other sources "blood" (*dam*).

You who ask me, ignorantly,
wanting to know me: I am the cream of nobility!
[31] My roots are from noble people, the Banū ʿĀmir,
and I stem from the Quraysh of the non-Arabs.[73]
I can take the place of any gallant young man;
I can seduce any young woman and she will not resist.

An example of his fine and charming love poetry:[74]

O my heart's desire, I shall not name you:
I mention another woman by name but I mean you.
You, with the sweetest saliva of all people—I have not tried it
except as attested by the ends of your toothbrushes![75]
You never visited me except once;
do it again, do not make it a rooster's egg![76]
O Mercy of God,[77] alight at our dwellings!
The smell of Paradise from your mouth is enough for me.

The following verses are among his original inventions:[78]

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73 Instead of the syntactically awkward *namatnī l-jiyādu Banū ʿĀmirin | furūʿī* I read, with the *Dīwān*, *namat fī l-kirāmi Banī ʿĀmirin | furūʿī*. The tribe of ʿĀmir ibn Ṣaʿṣaʿah belongs to Qays ʿAylān and the Northern Arabs. With "Quraysh of the non-Arabs" (*Quraysh al-ʿajam*) he refers to his alleged descent from Persian royalty, Quraysh being a pre-eminent Arab tribe because the Prophet belonged to it.

74 See Bashshār, *Dīwān*, iv, 143–144; Ibn Abī ʿAwn, *Tashbīhāt*, 107–108 (vss. 2–3); al-Washshāʾ, *Muwashshā*, 143 (vss. 2, 4 and two more verses); al-Qālī, *Amālī*, i, 228 (vss. 2–4); *Aghānī*, xxi, 88 (vss. 4, 3). The second verse especially is often quoted.

75 Sipping the beloved's saliva, which sounds odd in English, is a very common motif in Arabic love poetry (see e.g. Talib, "Unlearning the Aesthetics of Malicious Joy", 341–345). A *miswāk* is a twig used for picking as well as brushing the teeth and massaging the gums (I prefer "toothbrush" to its more usual translation as "toothpick"). See al-Khālidiyyān, *Ashbāh*, ii, 61–63 for similar verses by poets preceding or following Bashshār; on the *miswāk* see also al-Washshāʾ, *Muwashshā*, 140–145 (German translation by Bellmann, ii, 100–110).

76 Al-Thaʿālibī, *Thimār*, 489, 496, quoting this verse, records the belief that a cock may lay an egg, but only once; cf. al-Maydānī, *Majmaʿ*, i, 138–139 and the lexicons (e.g. Lane, *Lexicon*, under *ʿQR*, p. 2109). One wonders if this belief was based on a misinterpretation of Bashshār's verse. The phrase *bayḍat al-dīk* is mentioned by al-Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥayawān*, i, 310 (in a list of superstitious beliefs), ii, 343.

77 The woman's name was Raḥmah ("Mercy") according to *Aghānī*, xxi, 88–89.

78 Vs. 1 has not been found elsewhere; vs. 2 has been ascribed to Muslim ibn al-Walīd (Usāmah ibn Munqidh, *Badīʿ*, 185) and to Salm al-Khāsir (al-Sharīshī, *Sharḥ Maqāmāt al-Ḥarīri*, ii, 207). It is quoted anonymously in Ibn Qutaybah, *ʿUyūn*, iv, 26.

A virgin with black locks,
daubed with musk and *wars*;[79]
The women bring her in the morning,
obscuring the sun with another sun.

The verse ["O Mercy of God …"],[80] from a well-known poem of his, was quoted by Abū Nuwās in his verse:[81]

O Mercy of God, alight at our dwellings
and be our neighbour, and what a good neighbour!

The reports, anecdotes, and interesting facts about Bashshār are too numerous to be contained in this book. As we said before, we prefer to be brief and concise, and what we have presented should give a hint of what else there is.

79 A plant (*Memecylon tinctorium*) with leaves that produces a yellow dye.

80 The necessary parenthesis is editorial.

81 See *Aghānī*, xxi, 87, where this verse is preceded by "I love, for the sake of loving you, a verse | that I am fond of, by Bashshār". But these verses are not in Abū Nuwās's *Dīwān* and the first one opens a poem by Bashshār himself (*Dīwān*, iii, 146).

[32] **3 al-Sayyid al-Ḥimyarī**[1]

He is Ismāʿīl ibn Muḥammad ibn Yazīd ibn Rabīʿah ibn Mufarrigh al-Ḥimyarī,[2] a witty poet with a fine style and a natural talent, whose poetry is finely crafted. More than anyone else he is skilled in relating stories, reports, and glorious exploits in verse. Any known virtue of ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib (peace be upon him) {7} he incorporated ‖ in his poetry.

Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-Sadūsī, on the authority of al-Madāʾinī,[3] told me that Abū Hāshim [al-Sayyid al-Ḥimyarī] used to drink wine. When Sulaymān ibn Ḥabīb ibn al-Muhallab[4] became governor of al-Ahwāz—he was a friend of al-Sayyid—the latter travelled from Kufa to him. Sulaymān received him cordially and honoured him by making him his boon companion.[5] Al-Sayyid stayed with him for some time. Sulaymān did not drink wine, he would forbid others to drink it and he was very strict in this. Al-Sayyid therefore abstained from drinking it. He suffered from this and looked the worse for it. "I see you do not look as well as before," Sulaymān said one day. Al-Sayyid replied, "To tell the truth, Emir, I used to drink wine, which I found good for my digestion, it strengthened my limbs and fortified my physique. Then I abstained from it to humour the Emir (may God make him prosper), and you may see the

1 Abū Hāshim Ismāʿīl ibn Muḥammad ibn Yazīd, called al-Sayyid al-Ḥimyarī (d. between 171/787 and 179/795) has entries in *Aghānī*, vii, 228–278; Ibn Shākir, *Fawāt*, i, 188–193; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, vii, 196–202. He was known as an excellent and prolific poet and a fervid Shi'ite. His invective against the members of the Prophet's family other than the ʿAlids negatively affected the circulation of his poems, according to *Aghānī*, vii, 229–230. Among the several works about him, that by al-Marzubānī (d. 384/994), *Akhbār al-Sayyid al-Ḥimyarī*, is extant. Barbier de Meynard, "Le Seïd Himyarite" contains a French translation of the chapter in *Aghānī*. See also the entries in *GAS* ii, 458–460, ix, 288, *EAL*, 697–680, *EI2*, ix, 116–117.

2 His genealogy back to Ḥimyar, an ancestor of the "Southern Arab" tribes, may be traced in Ibn al-Kalbī/Caskel, *Ǧamharat an-nasab*, i, Tables 274, 277, 278 (ending with Yazīd ibn Mufarrigh, who was, as al-Marzubānī, *Akhbār al-Sayyid al-Ḥimyarī*, 19 claims, his maternal and not his paternal grandfather). Despite his nickname, "the Ḥimyarīte chief", he was an urban poet and not a tribal leader. Al-Marzubānī (ibid., quoting al-Ṣūlī) relates that people said, on account of his promising intelligence, "he'll be a *sayyid* one day!" and the nickname stuck.

3 Abū l-Ḥasan ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad al-Madāʾinī (d. 228/842–843), early historian, very often quoted by later authorities. For the following anecdote, compare the different version in *Aghānī*, vii, 273–275.

4 See *EI2*, vii, 358–360, "Muhallabids" (P. Crone), specifically 359b. Having joined the Abbasids against the Umayyads, he was nevertheless executed shortly after the revolution because earlier he had flogged the future caliph al-Manṣūr for non-delivery of taxes. *Aghānī*, vii, 240 reports that Sulaymān's appointment as governor of al-Ahwāz was due to al-Sayyid's request when asked for a reward for a panegyric poem for the first Abbasid caliph, al-Saffāḥ.

5 Being someone's boon companion (*nadīm*) normally implied being a drinking companion, but apparently not here.

result!" Sulaymān smiled, saying, "For the sake of someone who eulogises the family of God's Messenger (God bless him and his kin), we are obliged to tolerate his drinking wine! Have some, for it is your food!" He wrote a note to his official in al-Jabal,[6] "Let two hundred carafes of boiled wine[7] be brought to Abū Hāshim!" and gave the letter to al-Sayyid, who said, "May God make the Emir prosper! An eloquent man would be concise and make it shorter." "What do you think is wrong?" asked Sulaymān. Al-Sayyid replied, "You used two words where one would have done: keep ‖ 'wine' and delete 'boiled'!" "You are right," [33] said the governor, and al-Sayyid was brought what he wanted.[8]

Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh also told me that al-Sayyid had said to him:[9] "Once two men were quarrelling about Abū Bakr and ʿAlī.[10] They were at it for a long time but finally they agreed to make the first person to turn up the arbiter between them. Then I came along, riding a mule; they didn't know me." Al-Sayyid, as Muḥammad told me, was a good looking, big man. "The Shi'ite", continued al-Sayyid, "was the first to turn to me and he said, 'May God make you prosper! We have different views about something and we have agreed to let the first person to turn up be the arbiter between us.' I asked, 'What is it you quarrel about?' 'Well, I say that ʿAlī is the best of all people after the Messenger of God.'" Al-Sayyid continued, "So I said, 'And what does that son-of-a-bitch say then?'"

Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh said: al-Sidrī, who was al-Sayyid's transmitter,[11] said that al-Sayyid initially was a Kaysānite, who believed in the return of Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥanafiyyah.[12] He recited the following verse on this:[13]

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6 Al-Jabal, "the Mountain(s)", also al-Jibāl, was a province bordered by Fārs, Khūzistān, lower Iraq, and Azerbaijan.

7 *Mayfukhtaj*, or *maybukhtaj* (thus Dozy, *Supplément*, also in *Aghānī*, vii, 275 where it is wrongly vowelled *mībakhtaj*), from Middle Persian (*may-pukhtag*), would contain much less alcohol and might even be drunk with impunity according to Islamic law.

8 Perhaps the governor did not know enough Persian to know that *may* ("wine") and *may-pukhtaj* ("boiled wine") aren't synonyms; or he was well aware but rewarded the poet's brazen wit.

9 Here al-Madā'inī is not mentioned as intermediate transmitter, which may be an error in view of the timespan between the poet and Ibn al-Muʿtazz. For the anecdote see also the slightly different version in *Aghānī*, vii, 241.

10 Shi'ites believe that ʿAlī should have been the first caliph instead of Abū Bakr.

11 Prominent poets had one or more *rāwiyah*s, who memorised their poems. Al-Sayyid al-Ḥīmyarī had several (*GAS*, ii, 458–459).

12 On this Shi'ite sect, whose adherents believed that Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥanafiyyah (d. 81/700–701, a son of ʿAlī, half-brother of al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn) had been the true imam, who had not died but lived in occultation and would return as the Mahdi, see *EI2*, iv, 836–838 "Kaysāniyya" (W. Madelung).

13 Although the poem to which this verse belonged is said to have been well-known, only four

Until when, how much longer, for what stretch of time,
O son of the designated one,[14] while you are living, sustained by God?

The poem is well-known. Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh also told me that al-Sidrī had said that al-Sayyid continued to believe this until he met al-Ṣādiq[15] (peace be upon him) in Mecca while during his hajj. Al-Ṣādiq debated the matter with him and his arguments convinced him, so he abandoned his views. He mentions his renunciation and rejection of his former opinion in the following verses, in which he alludes to [Jaʿfar] al-Ṣādiq (peace be upon him):[16]

I have been Jaʿfarised, in the name of God, *Allāhu akbar*!
And I know for certain that God absolves and forgives.
He determines whatever He wills with His command,
He erases and decrees in all matters and is omnipotent.

Al-Anṣārī said, quoting al-ʿUtbī:[17] A man claimed some money from another
[34] man in the presence of Sawwār ‖ the judge.[18] Sawwār demanded proof. The only witnesses the man had were al-Sayyid and another man. When he brought them with him, Sawwār said, "We accept the testimony of Abū Hāshim, but you must bring another witness." Al-Sayyid believed that the other man's testimony had been rejected. But when the two left, the man said to al-Sayyid, "I swear to God, it was your testimony that he rejected! He did not say so openly because

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verses are found in al-Sayyid al-Ḥimyarī's *Dīwān*, 144; three of them are in al-Marzubānī, *Akhbār al-Sayyid al-Ḥimyarī*, 40, two are in al-Balādhurī, *Jumal*, ii, 424 and al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, iii, 278.

14 According to Shi'ites, ʿAlī was designated by the Prophet to succeed him as leader of the Muslims.

15 Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq (d. 148/765) was the sixth imam, the last to be recognised both by the Twelver and the Ismāʿīlī Shi'ites.

16 Al-Sayyid al-Ḥimyarī, *Dīwān*, 95 (in a poem of 8 verses); vs. 1 in al-Marzubānī, *Akhbār*, 40. Abū l-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī quotes it but believes the verse, together with the anecdote, is spurious (*Aghānī*, vii, 235–236) and the same opinion is quoted in al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, iii, 287. A main reason given is the indifferent quality of the poetry, especially the word *tajaʿfartu*, which is thought to be beneath the level of a good poet. They assert that the poet remained a Kaysānite until his death. See also *EI2*, ix, 116–117, "al-Sayyid al-Ḥimyarī" (Wadad Kadi).

17 See *Aghānī*, vii, 254–255 for a different version of the following anecdote. Al-ʿUtbī has an entry below (§ 66).

18 Sawwār ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-Tamīmī al-ʿAnbarī (d. 157/774), judge and governor of Basra (not to be confused with his grandson, the judge Sawwār ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Sawwār, d. 245/859–860).

he was afraid of your tongue." This turned out to be the case. Al-Sayyid, angry with Sawwār, lampooned him, tearing him to pieces:[19]

O Trustee appointed by God, {8}
  O Manṣūr, best of rulers!
Sawwār ibn ʿAbd Allāh
  is one of the worst judges.
Sawwār is blind,
  one of those loud-voiced sinners,
A camel-man,[20] a Naʿthal-man,[21]
  unsuitable to you!
His ancestor was a stealer of goats,[22]
  one sin of many sins
To the Messenger of God, whom he accused
  of abominable things,
And who stood, calling out,
  behind the private apartments:[23]
"Hey, you! Come outside to us!
  We are men of mischief!"[24]
So protect me from him (may God not
  protect him from the worst of mishaps!).
We have lampooned him, and those we lampoon
  will be struck with disasters!

19 *Dīwān*, 60–61 (13 vss.), *Aghānī*, vii, 261–262, al-Nahshalī, *Mumtiʿ*, 193. The poem is addressed to caliph al-Manṣūr (r. 136–158/754–775).

20 An allusion to the "Battle of the Camel" in 36/656 near Basra between ʿAlī and his opponents, among whom was the Prophet's widow ʿĀʾishah, attending the battle on a camel.

21 The editors of the *Ṭabaqāt*, *Aghānī*, and the *Dīwān* mention a Jew from Medina called Naʿthal who had a long beard, like the caliph ʿUthmān with whom he was confused at the time of ʿUthmān's murder. It is more likely, however, that it is a direct allusion to ʿUthmān, who was nicknamed Naʿthal ("long-bearded one"), see e.g. al-Thaʿālibī, *Laṭāʾif al-maʿārif*, 25, tr. Bosworth, 56.

22 A reference to his great-grandfather ʿAnazah ibn Naqb al-ʿAnbarī (Ibn al-Kalbi/Caskel, *Ǧamharat an-nasab*, i, Tab. 81), who was nicknamed *sāriq al-ʿanz*, "stealer of (the Prophet Muḥammad's) goats" (Ibn Durayd, *Ishtiqāq*, 132, al-Rāzī, *Zīnah*, iii, 47).

23 Q al-Ḥujurāt 49:4: *Those who call to you from behind the private apartments, most of them have no understanding …*, referring to some Bedouins who are rebuked for shouting for the Prophet, who was in the apartment of one of his wives.

24 The sense of *ahlu hanātī* is not wholly clear.

[35] He sent these verses to al-Manṣūr. Sawwār wrote also to the caliph: "Commander of the Believers! Al-Sayyid is a Rejecter,[25] who believes in the hidden imam's return and who allows temporary marriage!"[26] Al-Manṣūr wrote in reply, "We have appointed you as judge, not as calumniator!" He removed him from office and granted al-Sayyid a fief near Basra, from the lands of al-Ḥajjāj.[27]

Among his fine poetry is a poem called "the Golden Poem", which begins:[28]

Where can one go to extremes[29] of loyalty and passion?
Turn to false promises of rainless lightning clouds?
To Umayyah? Or to the followers of she who
arrived on a sturdy, big camel,[30]
Rushing from the holy town, arousing
in the morning, the dogs of the people of al-Ḥawʾab?[31]

It is a long poem and very famous, but we have limited ourselves to the verses we wanted to quote. Among his admired poetry on the family of the Messenger (God bless and preserve him) is the following:[32]

The Messenger went to al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn
when they came out to play one morning.
He embraced them, telling them how dear they were to him,
for he thought much of them.

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25 Rāfiḍī, i.e., a Shi'ite, who rejects the legitimacy of the first three caliphs.

26 *Mutʿah*, literally "enjoyment", here short for *zawāj al-mutʿah*, the technical term for a marriage contract for a fixed period, allowed in Twelver Shi'ism.

27 Al-Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf (d. 95/714), famous governor under the Umayyads.

28 *Dīwān*, 37–47 (113 vss.), where the quoted verses are not at the beginning but vss. 15–17. It is a eulogy on ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib.

29 Translation of *taṭarruf* uncertain; the *Dīwān* has *taṭarrub*, "have strong emotions".

30 Allusions to the Umayyads and to those siding with ʿĀ'ishah at the Battle of the Camel (see above).

31 This verse is quoted by al-Jāḥiẓ (*Ḥayawān*, ii, 208–209) in evidence of al-Sayyid's extremist Shi'ite views. It is told that when ʿĀ'ishah and the Meccan opponents of ʿAlī were on the way to Basra, shortly before the battle, she was worried by the barking of dogs at a place called al-Ḥawʾab, because she remembered the Prophet's warning to his wives: "I wonder which of you will hear the barking of dogs of al-Ḥawʾab!" (see e.g. Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-buldan* s.v. al-Ḥawʾab, al-Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, ii, 210, tr. *The Works of Ibn Wāḍiḥ al-Yaʿqūbī*, 827).

32 *Dīwān*, 214–215 (13 vss.); al-Bayhaqī, *Maḥāsin*, 76 (these three vss.); *Aghānī*, vii, 258–259 (11 vss.). As *Aghānī* explains, al-Sayyid composed the poem when he heard a hadith about the Prophet, whose two young grandsons, sons of his daughter Fāṭimah and ʿAlī, climbed upon his back when he was prostrating himself in prayer. The Shi'ite poet does not acknowledge that with the final hemistich he quotes ʿUmar, the future caliph.

He lowered his shoulders beneath them:
"a blessed mount and blessed riders!"

This poem, too, is famous, but we restrict ourselves to quoting only these verses. [36]
He composed so many excellent long poems that it would take us a long time to mention all of them. It is told that someone said, "I saw a carrier with a heavy load; he was very tired. I asked him, 'What is that?' and he replied, 'Al-Sayyid's poems with rhyme letter M!'"[33] Al-Sidrī relates that al-Sayyid had four daughters. He made each one memorise four hundred of his poems. That is sufficient evidence!

Al-Anṣārī told me that he had been informed by al-Mundhirī, who said, "When al-Sayyid was on his deathbed his servant looked at him and cried. 'Why are you crying?' asked al-Sayyid. The servant said, 'Why shouldn't I cry, since you are dying and you have no shroud!' Al-Sayyid said, 'When I am dead, go to the silkworkers street[34] and say, "I say, al-Sayyid al-Ḥimyarī is dead, the one who eulogised the family of the Messenger of God (peace be upon him)!"' The servant did as he was told, and presently seventy shrouds arrived, some with brocade and Dabīqī cloth."[35]

These are the reports about him.[36]

33 Even when allowing for some exaggeration in this report, it is clear from the mere 25 pages with such poems in his extant poetry (*Dīwān*, 167–191) that much has been lost.

34 The text has the unintelligible *ṣaff al-s.y.m.ziyyīn*. I follow Farrāj, who suggests reading *ṣaff al-khazzāzīn* (cf. *Aghānī*, vii, 278, less plausibly: *ṣaff al-jazzārīn*, "the butchers' street").

35 A high-quality cloth, from Dabīq in Egypt, see *EI2*, ii, 72–73, "Dabīḳ" (G. Wiet).

36 There follows an incomplete sentence: *wa-kāna shi'ruhū raḥimahu llāh* … ("and his poetry—may God have mercy on him—was …"). In a note, Eghbal, followed by Farrāj, quotes from a work by a late Shi'ite scholar, al-Qāḍī Nūr Allāh [al-Shushtarī], *Majālis al-mu'minīn*, with ten verses by al-Sayyid, said to have been quoted by Ibn al-Mu'tazz; see also al-Sayyid, *Dīwān*, 197–198.

[37] **4 Sudayf**[1]

Sudayf was an eminent, proficient, erudite poet and an eloquent orator, who composed fine, natural poetry. Al-ʿAwfī told me, quoting Aḥmad ibn Ibrāhīm al-Riyāḥī: Sudayf ibn Maymūn once greeted a man of ʿAbd al-Dār,[2] who replied, "Who are you?". Sudayf said, "May God make you prosper! I am one of your people. I am Sudayf ibn Maymūn." The man of ʿAbd al-Dār said, "I swear to God, I don't know anybody of my kin called Maymūn ('Fortunate')!" Sudayf retorted, "Nor any Mubārak ('Blessed')."[3]

Jaʿfar ibn Ibrāhīm al-Jaʿfarī told me that Sudayf was the *mawlā* of a woman of
{9} Khuzāʿah, whose spouse belonged ‖ to the Lahabīs.[4] It was on this ground that Sudayf claimed to the Banū Hāshim. Al-Madāʾinī, however, said that he was a *mawlā* of the Abbasids[5] and their poet. During the reign of the Umayyads Sudayf would repeat that he was innocent of their injustice, their wrongdoing, and their aggression, saying,[6]

> O God! Our booty has become the dynasty's, though once it was divided fairly; our leadership has become a matter of dominance after having
> [38] been one of consultation; ‖ our pledges of allegiance are based on heredity, after having been the choice of the community.[7] Musical instruments and other frivolities are bought with the property intended for orphan

1 Sudayf ibn Maymūn, poet from Mecca. a *mawlā* of the tribe of Khuzāʿah, executed 147/764; entries in Muḥammad ibn Ḥabīb, *Mughtālīn*, 334–337; Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 761–762; al-Marzubānī, *Akhbār shuʿarāʾ al-Shīʿah*, 76–78; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh Madīnat Dimashq*, xx, 148–153; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xv, 125–127; *Aghānī*, xvi, 134–135 and see iv, 344–351 for his poems inciting the first Abbasid caliph to kill the surviving Umayyads. On this famous episode see also al-Balādhurī, *Jumal*, iv, 212–213; al-Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, ii, 430–431 (tr. *The Works*, 1087–1088); al-Mubarrad, *Kāmil*, iii, 208–209; Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, iv, 486; Ibn Aʿtham, *Futūḥ*, viii, 341–344; Ibn Rashīq, *ʿUmdah*, i, 62–63. Sudayf has entries in *GAS*, ii, 449–450; *EI2*, ix, 761–762. In some modern reference works his name is given as Sudayf ibn Mahrān ibn Maymūn or Sudayf ibn Ismāʿīl ibn Maymūn; I have not found confirmation of either version in older sources.

2 ʿAbd al-Dār was a branch of Quraysh, the leading Meccan tribe.

3 The man of ʿAbd al-Dār implies that Sudayf, as a *mawlā*, does not belong to Quraysh. Compare the version in *Aghānī*, xvi, 136.

4 The descendants of Muḥammad's uncle Abū Lahab ibn ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib ibn Hāshim. The Abbasids are often called Banū Hāshim, after the ancestor they shared with the Prophet Muḥammad.

5 The Abbasids are descended from al-ʿAbbās, another uncle of the Prophet and Abū Lahab's brother.

6 For slightly different versions see Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 761; idem, *ʿUyūn*, i, 76 and ii, 115; al-Tawḥīdī, *Baṣāʾir*, iii, 90–91; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh*, xx, 150.

7 A reference to the hereditary succession introduced by the Umayyad caliphs.

> or widow. Non-Muslims[8] are made to rule over the bodies of Muslims. In every place a profligate man is in charge of their affairs. Nobody protects them from ruin. No one commiserates and looks at them with a merciful eye. Those seeking refuge from injustice do not find anybody to prevent it. No pitying people satiate the starving bodies of those suffering from famine. They are weak, ruined, ever grieving and being humbled. But now the crop of falsehood is ready to be harvested, its end is nigh, the runaway camel will be retrieved, brought back, and it will be made to rest its neck upon the ground.[9] O God, grant that a hand of truth, a Reaper, will cut off its hump, crush its legs, scatter its assembled parts, and disperse its force, that Truth may appear in its finest form, its fullest light, and its greatest blessing! O God, we know that we ourselves have imperfections that make us unable to respond to this call, but You bestow grace to all creatures and give benefaction to those who ask. So bring us what You command according to Your generosity, Your liberality, and Your benevolence. You decree what You will and act as You intend.

Jaʿfar ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Maymūn also told me, quoting Isḥāq ibn Manṣūr, who said that Abū l-Khaṣīb al-Asadī had told him that when the days of the Umayyads had ended and their dynasty terminated, when the caliphate had come to the Abbasids, among them al-Saffāḥ, the son of al-Ḥārithiyyah,[10] the news reached Sudayf, who was in Mecca at the time. He mounted his camel and rode to Abū l-ʿAbbās [al-Saffāḥ], whom he knew personally. When he arrived[11] al-Saffāḥ asked him, "Who are you?" "I am Sudayf ibn Maymūn." "Are you my *mawlā* Sudayf?" "Yes, Commander of the Believers!" He congratulated him on becoming caliph, prayed for blessings on him, and recited the poem that begins as follows:[12]

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8 *Ahl al-dhimmah*, "protected people", referring to non-Muslims living in the lands of Islam.

9 For this metaphor cf. Lane, *Lexicon*, JRN: "*alqā jirānahū bi-l-arḍ*, *He threw the under part of his neck upon the ground* (…), You say also, *ḍaraba l-ḥaqq bi-jirānihī*, meaning *The truth*, or *right*, or *just claim*, *became established*, or *settled*."

10 The mother of Abū l-ʿAbbās al-Saffāḥ (r. 132–136/749–754) was Rayṭah bint ʿUbayd Allāh of the tribe of al-Ḥārith ibn Kaʿb.

11 Compare *Aghānī*, iv, 344 and al-Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, ii, 430, tr. *The Works*, 1087 for a more dramatic description of Sudayf's entrance, who refuses to remove his veil until he is in the presence of the Caliph.

12 See *Aghānī*, iv, 345 (12 vss.); al-Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, ii, 431, tr. *The Works*, 1087–1088 (11 vss.); al-Balādhurī, *Jumal*, iv, 213 (8 vss.); al-Mubarrad, *Kāmil*, iii, 208–209 (9 vss., attributed to Shibl ibn ʿAbd Allāh, with the same attribution in Ibn Rashīq, *ʿUmdah*, i, 62); Ibn Qutaybah, *ʿUyūn*, i, 207 (anonymously, 4 vss.); Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, iv, 486 (7 vss.), al-Marzubānī,

[39] The realm now has a firm foundation
in the noble chiefs of the Abbasids.
[Do not forgive the missteps of ʿAbd Shams
and cut down every lofty tree and young shoot!][13]
I am offended, as are those like me,
by their presence on cushions[14] and chairs.
Remember the killing of al-Ḥusayn and Zayd,
and the victim slain near al-Mihrās![15]
And the one killed who in Ḥarrān
was entrusted to a grave, in alien land and oblivion![16]
Now, being laid low they show affection.
Act on them like the cutting of a razor!
Send them down where God will send them,
to the abode of misery and overturning!

These words had an effect on Abū l-ʿAbbās and he was greatly moved. Some members of the Umayyad clan were present, who said, "An uncouth Bedouin who does not know what he is saying!" The people left at that, but the following morning[17] Abū l-ʿAbbās sent for them, saying, "Assemble this morning in the presence of the Commander of the Believers. Bring your leader, Sulaymān ibn Hishām, with you, so that he may determine stipends and a safe-conduct

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Akhbār shuʿarāʾ al-Shīʿah, 76–77 (11 vss.); and many later sources. Ibn al-Muʿtazz quotes vss. 1, 11, 9–10, 7, 6 of *Aghānī*'s version.

13 Farrāj inserts this verse (vs. 5 of the version of *Aghānī*) for the sake of clarity, for it explains the pronoun "their" in the following verse. Sudayf addresses the caliph. ʿAbd Shams, brother of Hāshim (great-grandfather of the Prophet), was the father of Umayyah, the eponymous ancestor of the Umayyads.

14 The text has *manābir* ("pulpits, minbars") but I prefer to read, with some other sources (al-Balādhurī, *Aghānī*, al-Yaʿqūbī, al-Mubarrad), *namāriq* ("cushions"), which seems a better reading. The account in *Aghānī* relates that some Umayyads were present, seated on pillows (*wasāʾid*); al-Mubarrad speaks of eighty of them seated on dining mats (*sumuṭ al-ṭaʿām*).

15 Al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib, the prime Shi'ite martyr, was killed in 61/680 at Karbala. His grandson Zayd ibn ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn died 122/740, mortally wounded after having rebelled against the Umayyads; the Zaydī Shi'ite branch is called after him. Ḥamzah ibn ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib, the Prophet's uncle, was buried at al-Mihrās, having been killed at the Battle of Uḥud in 3/625 fighting the Meccans led by Abū Sufyān, father of Muʿāwiyah who became the first Umayyad caliph.

16 Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī, called Ibrāhīm al-Imām, brother of al-Saffāḥ and a leader of the Abbasid revolution, was captured and died in prison in Ḥarrān in 132/749.

17 In other versions (e.g. al-Yaʿqūbī and *Aghānī*), with heightened dramatic effect, the caliph acts on the spot after Sudayf's recital.

for you."[18] Sulaymān, whose *kunyah* was Abū l-Ghamr, had been a friend of Abū l-ʿAbbās before the latter became caliph; he would correspond with him and fulfil his needs. So, early that morning they all turned up, coming to Abū l-ʿAbbās together with Abū l-Ghamr. The Caliph gave them permission to enter and made them sit down, placing Abū l-Ghamr Sulaymān ibn Hishām on his right on his caliphal seat. When Sudayf heard that they had gathered he also asked leave ‖ to enter. When he stood before the Caliph, he saw they were all {10}
sitting like the day before, and he saw Abū l-Ghamr on the Caliph's seat. Among them was a man of the tribe of Kalb, a maternal uncle of Abū l-Ghamr, who had been prevented from entering by the chamberlain when they all came in. The man had called out, "Abū l-Ghamr, this fellow will not let me ‖ enter!" Then Abū [40]
l-Ghamr said, "This man is one of my maternal relations, let him come in!" The chamberlain said to him, "Damn you, get back, for he is better than you!" "No," said the man, "I will come in!" The other replied, "You know best!" Thereupon Sudayf said,[19]

Be not deluded by these men you see:
under their ribs there is a vile festering disease.
Apply the sword, raise the whip, until
you can't see a single Umayyad on earth!

He went on, reciting the poem until the end, while Abū l-ʿAbbās turned red with fury and resentment. Sulaymān ibn Hishām said to Sudayf, "You son of such-and-such a woman, will you not shut up!" But Abū l-ʿAbbās grew even angrier at his words. He looked at the Khorasanians,[20] who were standing in attendance with their cudgels. He said to them, in Persian, "*Dihīd*!", i.e., "Strike!" Then they smashed their skulls with their cudgels until they had dealt with the last of them. The Caliph looked at Sulaymān, saying, "Abū l-Ghamr, There's no good in living on for you, after they've gone!" "Indeed!" replied Sulaymān. Then they smashed his skull and dragged him by his feet, throwing him with the others. The man of the tribe of Kalb cried out, "Commander of the Believers, I belong

18 Translation of *li-yafriḍa lakum wa-yujīzakum* uncertain; a parallel text has *li-yafriḍa lahum fī l-ʿaṭāʾ* (Ibn Qutaybah, *ʿUyūn*, i, 207). Sulaymān was the son of the Umayyad caliph Hishām (r. 105–125/724–743).

19 The verses are in Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 761; idem, *ʿUyūn*, i, 208; al-Balādhurī, *Jumal*, iv, 213; al-Mubarrad, *Kāmil*, iii, 208; Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, iv, 486 (preceded by two more verses); *Aghānī*, iv, 348 (preceded by two more verses); and many later sources.

20 The Abbasid revolution had begun in Khorasan, and Khorasanians, either Arab or indigenous, had been the mainstay of the early Abbasid armies.

to Kalb!" But the Caliph said, "You aided those men when they were having a good time, now aid them too when they are having a hard time!" He gestured, meaning "Strike him down", and down he went, with the others! He had them all heaped together and he gave orders for leather mats to be spread over them. Then he sat down upon them. He ordered some food and ate, while some of the men were still moving and others could be heard moaning. When he had finished eating, [they said to him, "Would][21] you not give orders to bury them, or move them somewhere else? Because you may suffer from their smell!" But he replied, "I swear to God, I like this smell better than the smell [of musk or ambergris]! At last my thirst for revenge is slaked!"[22]

The following verses of love poetry by Sudayf are admired:[23]

I find fault with the girl I love and I lavish praise on other girls,
who find her clearly excelling above themselves.
[41] In spite of myself, I steadily avoid her when she appears,
wary, for her sake, of ears and eyes.

Sudayf composed the following on a commander in charge of Mecca, belonging to the Banū Jumaḥ:[24]

A commander of the Banū Jumaḥ,
of noble descent, praiseworthy:
If we publicise our praise poems on him
he will compensate us with silver dirhams.

When Ibrāhīm ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Ḥasan rebelled in Basra,[25] Sudayf joined him, fleeing from al-Manṣūr and showing his hostility to the Abbasids. One day

21 Farraj adds a few words from *Aghānī* for the text to make sense.

22 Confusingly, a very similar massacre, with numerous identical details, is found in Ibn Qutaybah, *ʿUyūn*, i, 206–208 and Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, iv, 483–485, where the caliph is not al-Saffāḥ but his brother and successor al-Manṣūr, and al-Ghamr ibn Yazīd (son of the Umayyad caliph Yazīd ibn ʿAbd al-Malik) instead of Abū l-Ghamr Sulaymān ibn Hishām. The several versions have been studied by Moscati, "Le massacre des Umayyades".

23 The verses are attributed to Yazīd ibn al-Ṭathriyyah (d. 126/744) in Ibn Dāwūd al-Iṣbahānī, *Zahrah*, 61 and al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xxviii, 400; see also Ibn al-Ṭathriyyah, *Shiʿr*, 93–95. The Banū Jumaḥ are a branch of Quraysh.

24 Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 761.

25 He and his brother Muḥammad, called al-Nafs al-Zakiyyah, revolted against the Abbasids in 145/762; he was killed the same year.

Ibrāhīm mounted the pulpit and addressed the people; then Sudayf stood up and turned to him, saying,[26]

O Abū Isḥāq![27] May you enjoy
lasting health and long life!
Remember—may God guide you—the rancour
of those carried off in solid fetters!

He meant his father and those carried off with him. When Ibrāhīm was killed, Sudayf fled and went into hiding until ‖ the brunt of the revolt had subsided. [42]
Then he wrote to al-Manṣūr, asking him to grant him a pardon. He sent him these verses:[28]

O Manṣūr, the best of Arabs,
the best of those ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib brought forth![29]
I am your *mawlā* and hope for your forgiveness, {11}
so forgive me today before I am ruined!

But al-Manṣūr wrote his reply on the same letter, in his own handwriting:

Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī[30] is not my father
if after all this I call myself your patron!

He wrote to his uncle ʿAbd al-Ṣamad ibn ʿAlī[31] with the orders to have Sudayf killed. It is said that he had his hands and feet and then his head cut off. Others say that he was taken to al-Manṣūr and buried alive.[32]

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26 Al-Balādhurī, *Jumal*, iii, 351; Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 762; al-Iṣfahānī, *Maqātil*, 272.

27 Al-Iṣfahānī explains that this is a poetic licence: anyone called Ibrāhīm could be called "Isḥāq's father", after the patriarchs; Ibrāhīm's real *kunyah* was Abū l-Ḥasan.

28 The verses, together with the Caliph's reply, are in al-Balādhurī, *Jumal*, iii, 351, Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 762.

29 ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib was the father of al-ʿAbbās and the grandfather of the Prophet Muḥammad (so the poet seems to imply that the caliph was better than Muḥammad).

30 Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī, great-grandson of al-ʿAbbās, was al-Manṣūr's father.

31 He died at a great age during the reign of Hārūn al-Rashīd ("with all the milk teeth that he was born with, not having changed them", see Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, iii, 195).

32 For a different account of Sudayf's death see Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, v, 87–89, Ibn Rashīq, *ʿUmdah*, i, 74–75. Ibn Aʿtham, *Futūḥ*, viii, 353 and Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh*, xx, 152 have yet another grisly death of Sudayf (put in a sack, his bones broken with clubs, and thrown into a well when still alive).

Muḥammad ibn Ḥāzim told me that al-Namarī, the poet,[33] who transmitted much poetry by Sudayf, said that in Sudayf's time there was no better or more naturally talented poet, or abler to say what he wanted, than he. Al-Namarī denied that al-Manṣūr had him killed. "What happened to the Umayyads", he said, "was only Sudayf's doing". He also said that Sudayf never abandoned Abū l-ʿAbbās and, after him, al-Manṣūr until he died. His poems and reports about him are many, but we restrict ourselves to this.

33 Manṣūr al-Namarī has an entry below, § 39.

5 Marwān ibn Abī Ḥafṣah[1]

He is Marwān ibn Sulaymān ibn Yaḥyā ibn Abī Ḥafṣah. Abū Ḥafṣah was a *mawlā* of Marwān ibn al-Ḥakam,[2] who had freed him on the Day of the House[3] for his brave conduct ‖ on that day. This is attested in Marwān's verse that refers to the freeing of Abū Ḥafṣah:[4] [43]

> The Marwānids are the people who freed me;
> all other people are slaves to them!

ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad al-Tamīmī told me on the authority of his father Muḥammad ibn Ḥanẓalah that Sharāḥīl ibn Maʿn ibn Zāʾidah said:[5] "On the road to Mecca I came across Yaḥyā ibn Khālid,[6] who sat in a pavilion together with his companion, [Abū] Yūsuf the Judge;[7] they were going on hajj. I was about to enter the pavilion when a man of the Banū Asad, of handsome appearance, presented himself to Yaḥyā. He recited some poetry. On one particular verse Yaḥyā said, 'Didn't I tell you not to use that motif again?' He went

1 Marwān ibn Abī Ḥafṣah, born 105/723 in al-Yamāmah (central Arabia) of non-Arab (Persian or Jewish) descent, became a court poet of the Abbasid caliphs al-Mahdī and al-Rashīd. He should not be confused with his grandson, Marwān ibn Abī Ḥafṣah al-Aṣghar ("Junior"), on whom see below, § 106. He died 182/797 (other dates are also given). The main entries on him are found in Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 763–765; *Aghānī*, x, 70–95; al-Marzubānī, *Muʿjam*, 317–319; idem, *Muwashshaḥ*, 390–395; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, xv, 182–186; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh*, lxvii, 285–299; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, v, 189–193; al-Nashshābī, *Mudhākarah*, 76–81; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xxv, 447–451; Ibn Faḍl Allāh, *Masālik* (ed. al-Jubūrī), xiv, 336–339; see also GAS, ii, 447–448, ix, 287; EAL, 511; EI2, vi, 625–626.

2 Umayyad caliph (r. 64–65/784–785), the first of the Umayyad branch called Marwānids after him.

3 *Yawm al-Dār*, referring to the killing of the third caliph, ʿUthmān in his own house by rebels, in 35/656.

4 Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 763.

5 Sharāḥīl's father Maʿn ibn Zāʾidah (d. 152/769–770) was a famous commander and governor under the later Umayyads and early Abbasids, and a generous patron of poets, among them Marwān; see EI2, vi, 345 (H. Kennedy).

6 Yaḥyā ibn Khālid ibn Barmak (d. 190/805), of the famous line of viziers and high officials called the Barmakids (al-Barāmikah), on whom see EI2, i, 1033–1036 (W. Barthold and D. Sourdel); EI3, "Barmakids" (Kevin van Bladel); EIr, "Barmakids" (I. Abbas).

7 Abū Yūsuf (d. 182/798), the famous judge and jurisprudent, one of the founders of the Hanafi law school, chief judge under Hārūn al-Rashīd. The word *Abū* is missing from Farrāj's edition but found in the MS. I am not certain of the sense of *ʿadīluhū* (literally, "his equal"), here rendered as "his companion".

on, 'When you, man of the Banū Asad, want to compose poetry, say something like the one who said,[8]

The Banū Maṭar, on a day of battle, are like
lions, whose cubs are found in the valley of Khaffān.[9]
They protect their neighbour, who dwells safely
as if between the stars Arcturus and Spica.
Heroes in Islam; they were lords, while there was
no leader in pre-Islamic times like their leader.
They are people who, if they speak, hit the mark; if they are called upon,
respond; and if they give, give graciously, abundantly.[10]
No others can do their good deeds,
however much they act decently in times of disasters.
Their knee-wraps are wrapped as if around mountains;[11]
their wise conduct, when weighed, is even weightier than those.'

Abū Yūsuf, who liked the verses, said to the man, 'Who composed these verses, Abū ʿAlī?' Yaḥyā answered, 'They are by Marwān ibn Abī Ḥafṣah, in a panegyric on the father of this man who just entered the pavilion!'" Sharāḥīl continued,
[44] "Then Abū Yūsuf looked at me, while I was still on horseback, ‖ and asked me, 'Who are you then, young man, may God bless you with long life?' So I said, 'I am Sharāḥīl, the son of Maʿn ibn Zāʾidah.'" Sharāḥīl added, "I swear to God, I

8 The verses are often quoted. See e.g. Marwān ibn Abī Ḥafṣah, *Shiʿr*, 88–89; Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 765 (vss. 4, 2); Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, i, 135 (vss. 4, 3), v, 291 (vss. 1–5); Ibn Ṭabāṭabā, *ʿIyār*, 109–110; *Aghānī*, x, 90 (vss. 1–5); al-ʿAskarī, *Dīwān al-maʿānī*, i, 47; idem, *Ṣināʿatayn*, 109; al-Marzubānī, *Muʿjam*, 318 (vss. 4–5); al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā, *Amālī*, i, 587; Ibn Rashīq, *ʿUmdah*, ii, 142 (vss. 1–5); Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, v, 190; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xxv, 449.

9 The Banū Maṭar are a branch of Shaybān, the tribe of Maʿn ibn Zāʾidah (Maṭar is his great-great-grandfather, see Ibn al-Kalbī/Caskel, *Ǧamharat an-nasab*, Table 146). Several locations called Khaffān are mentioned by Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, s.v., and Abū ʿUbayd al-Bakrī, *Muʿjam*, 505–501.

10 The verse has internal rhymes: … *in qālū aṣābū wa-in duʿū | ajābū wa-in aʿṭaw aṭābū wa-ajzalū*.

11 A difficult verse, as is clear from the many variants. The MS seems to have *thalāthūn … ḥibāʾuhum* (perhaps for *khibāʾuhum*); Farrāj's edition has *tulāthu … ḥibāhumū*; Marwān, *Dīwān*: *thalāthun … ḥubāhumū*; the same al-Murtaḍā, *Amālī*; Ibn Ṭabāṭabā: *thalāthun … ḥubābuhum*; al-ʿAskarī, *Dīwān al-maʿānī*: *thalāthun ḥayāhumū*; idem, *Ṣināʿatayn*: *tulāthu … ḥ.bāhumū*; Ibn Khallikān: *tulāthu … ḥubāhumū*; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*: *thalāthun … ḥibāluhumū*. There are also versions with *jibāhuhum* and *khibāhumū*. I follow Farrāj's text; *ḥubā* or *ḥibā* is the plural of *ḥubwah/ḥibwah*, a piece of cloth (e.g., a turban) wrapped around the knees when squatting. The Banū Maṭar are compared to mountains; their *aḥlām* (pl. of *ḥilm*, "wisdom and forbearance") are even weightier.

never knew a moment I was happier than at that moment, feeling pleased and delighted."

Yaḥyā ibn Abī Ḥafṣah[12] had married ʿAmrah, daughter of Ibrāhīm ibn al-Nuʿmān ibn Bashīr al-Anṣārī,[13] for a bridal dower of 20,000 dirhams. He sent her dower to her before the consummation of the marriage. People criticised Ibrāhīm, saying, "You have married your daughter to a slave! You have shamed yourself and your father!" ‖ They wanted him to withdraw his daughter from the {12}
deal, but he refused. It became a great matter. Ibrāhīm composed the following verses about it:[14]

> Twenty-thousand dirhams are not given up just because someone
> says something! I do not care about the words of critics.
> I may have married my daughter to a *mawlā*: well, this custom existed
> before my time, and so did the love of dirhams.

It is said that Abū Ḥafṣah was a Jew, who converted to Islam at the hand of ʿUthmān.[15] He became very wealthy and came to be in charge of the treasury of the Umayyads. He[16] married Khawlah, daughter of Muqātil ibn Ṭulbah ibn Qays ibn ʿĀṣim, Qays ibn ʿĀṣim having been the lord of the Bedouins.[17] Al-Qulākh, the poet, lampooned Muqātil ibn Ṭulbah on account of this:[18]

> I am told that Khawlah said, when he gave her in marriage,
> "So often have I expected you would put me to shame!
> You married your daughters to two slaves, wishing their abundant
> wealth:

12 The poet's grandfather.

13 Ibrāhīm's father, al-Nuʿmān ibn Bashīr (d. 65/684), was also a poet. See Sezgin, *GAS*, ii, 354–355.

14 Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 764; idem, *ʿUyūn*, iv, 16; al-Mubarrad, *Kāmil*, ii, 101–103. In Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, vi, 131–132 the verses are said to be by Muqātil ibn Qays ibn ʿĀṣim (on whom see the next paragraph).

15 The third caliph.

16 According to al-Mubarrad, *Kāmil*, ii, 102 and Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, vi, 131 it was not Abū Ḥafṣah but his son Yaḥyā who became rich and married Khawlah.

17 The Arabic has *ahl al-wabar*, "people of camel and goat hair", a common idiom for Bedouins. Qays ibn ʿĀṣim al-Minqarī (d. 47/667) was a very famous Bedouin chief, see *EI2*, "Ḳays b. ʿĀṣim" (M.J. Kister).

18 Ibn Qutaybah, *ʿUyūn*, iv, 16; idem, *al-Shiʿr*, 763–764; al-Mubarrad, *Kāmil*, ii, 103; Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, vi, 131. On al-Qulākh ibn Janāb ibn Ḥazn al-Minqarī see Sezgin, *GAS*, ii, 344. Compare the different verses by al-Qulākh on Yaḥyā's marriage and Yaḥyā's response in verse in *Aghānī*, x, 75–76.

Dust and stones in your mouth for what you hope for!
Those fine, noble steeds whose leader you are:
you made them into hackneys, despite their white fetlocks and blazes!"

[45] Marwān is one of those excellent poets who finely polish their poems.[19] [Among the best elegies on Maʿn ibn Zāʾidah are the following verses:[20]

Lamenting you means sorrows and tears coming readily,
which stir up fresh blood inside the body.
I swallowed my tears after the death of Maʿn;
truly, what he had to drink and swallow was worse.[21]
Strange, that you should spend the night lying down in this tragedy
while I spend the night enjoying all that you bestowed on me!
If I were to do justice in loving you, I would not spend the night
differing from you, so that we would be enveloped in death together.
Visit Maʿn, you two,[22] and say to his grave:
"May morning clouds rain on you, springtime after springtime!
Grave of Maʿn! Why have you hidden his generosity?
Land and sea were brimful with it!
Grave of Maʿn! You are the first spot
on earth laid out as resting place for noble deeds;
A man in whose bounty one lives even after his death,
just as a valley becomes pasture after a torrent.
When Maʿn passed away, generosity passed away and ended.
The nose of nobility was cut off!"

19 *Min al-mujīdin al-muḥakkikīn*; cf. al-Aṣmaʿī on Bashshār (*Aghānī*, iii, 149): "He was a natural poet (…), not like those who compose a verse and then polish it (*yuḥakkikuhū*) for days. Bashshār resembles al-Aʿshā and al-Nābighah al-Dhubyānī; Marwān resembles Zuhayr and al-Ḥuṭay'ah." The following bracketed passage with three pieces of verse is taken from the *Mukhtaṣar* (ed. Farrāj, pp. 430–431).

20 Marwān, *Shiʿr*, 114–116, where the editor points out that these verses (including the two consolatory verses that follow) are in fact by al-Ḥusayn ibn Muṭayr al-Asadī (see below, §18). See also al-Ḥusayn ibn Muṭayr, *Shiʿr*, 172–174 and the many references, 202–204. For a poem on Maʿn ibn Zāʾidah by Marwān with the same metre and rhyme (which seems to have caused the confusion) see his *Shiʿr*, 63–65.

21 I follow the editors of Marwān and Ibn Muṭayr's poetry, reading *la-aʿẓamu minhā* instead of *li-aʿẓama minhā* as in Farrāj's edition.

22 The old poetic convention: addressing two unnamed companions.

From this poem are also the following consolatory verses for his son, Zā'idah ibn Maʿn:

Be consoled, Abū l-ʿAbbās, be strong! What Maʿn gave you
means that you should not be laid low,[23]
For he whose son you were has not died, no,
nor he who worked for the good like your father.

One of his best poems is the elegy on al-Mutawakkil, in which he praised his son al-Muntaṣir:[24]

Now graves in every town are feeling proud
of the grave of the Commander of the Believers.
Had they not been soothed, after his death, by his son,
pulpits would not have stopped lamenting him.]

His elegies on Maʿn ibn Zā'idah are admired and likewise his wonderful panegyric poems on him. It is said that he entered into the presence of Jaʿfar ibn Yaḥyā al-Barmakī,[25] having praised him with an ode. He recited:

He won; no noble steed[26] can hope to overtake him:
Abū l-Faḍl,[27] outstripper of heroes, Jaʿfar!
A vizier who, whenever a misfortune strikes the Caliph,
points out to him how to escape from it.

But Jaʿfar said, "Ah, stop it! Recite your elegy on Maʿn:[28]

23 Instead of *fa-in yakun* I read, with the other sources, *wa-lā yakun*.

24 As Farrāj points out in a note, al-Mutawakkil died in 247/861, long after Marwān; he thinks there is a confusion with his grandson, the younger Marwān (see below, § 106). But the verses are in fact by the older Marwān, not on al-Mutawakkil but on the death of al-Mahdī, consoling his son al-Hādī, see *Aghānī*, x, 93, Marwān, *Shiʿr*, 48.

25 Jaʿfar ibn Yaḥyā ibn Khālid al-Barmakī, Hārūn al-Rashīd's vizier, was executed in 187/803 at the dramatic fall of the Barmakids. Compare the version of this anecdote in Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, v, 251–352, said to be taken from Ibn al-Muʿtazz's *Ṭabaqāt* (but the two following verses are not there). See Marwān, *Shiʿr*, 51.

26 *Jawād* means both "noble steed" and "generous man".

27 Abū l-Faḍl, "father of al-Faḍl" is Jaʿfar's teknonym; it could be translated literally as "Father of Excellence", or "Father of Grace".

28 More of the elegy (35 verses) is quoted below; see also Marwān, *Shiʿr*, 79–83 (54 verses).

All people, until he went to his grave,
were Maʿn's dependents."

Thereupon Marwān recited the poem until the end, while Jaʿfar's eyes were shedding tears. When Marwān fell silent, Jaʿfar asked him, "Has any of his children or kin ever rewarded you for this?" Marwān replied, "No." Jaʿfar asked, "If Maʿn were alive and could hear you recite it, how much would he have given you?" "Four hundred [dinars]."[29] Jaʿfar said, "I don't think he would have found that enough for you. It is my command on behalf of Maʿn that you be given double that amount, and we ourselves add the same sum. So take one thousand and six hundred dinars from the treasurer before you leave!" Then Marwān composed verses, mentioning this while eulogising Maʿn and adding the verses to his elegy on Maʿn:[30]

You spread fragrant noble gifts from Maʿn's grave
to us, generously, in buckets,
And you gave the gift promptly, Ibn Yaḥyā,
not wanting any delay.
A generous man rewarded, on behalf of Maʿn's spirit,[31]
with the most generous hand that ever freely spent a gift.
[46] Khālid and your father Yaḥyā built for you
an edifice of noble deeds that shall never be attained again.
A Barmakī, it seems, brings riches with all the riches
that his hands generously give.

One of his excellent and most important poems is the one he composed for Maʿn ibn Zāʾidah, whose full genealogy is Maʿn ibn [ʿAbd Allāh ibn Zāʾidah][32] ibn Maṭar ibn Sharīk ibn ʿAmr ibn Qays ibn Sharāḥīl ibn Hammām ibn Murrah ibn [Dhuhl ibn] Shaybān. The opening of this poem, all of which is exquisite, is:[33]

29 The word "dinars" is taken from Ibn Khallikān's version.
30 The five verses are given as a separate piece in Marwān, *Shiʿr*, 84.
31 The word translated as "spirit", *ṣadā*, may mean "echo" but in early Arabic poetry it often refers to a bird whose sound may be heard at the grave of someone who was killed (as was Maʿn) and whose death was unavenged. See also below, pp. 123, 150–151; Lane, *Lexicon*, *ṢDY*; Homerin, "Echoes of a Thirsty Owl".
32 The added words in this lineage are take from Ibn Khallikān.
33 Marwān, *Shiʿr*, 77–78 (only nine verses are preserved).

Hoary hair has replaced youthfulness,
as a guest who stays and does not want to depart.
The white of the hair, when it chases away the black,
is like dawn that drives away the darkness.

Marwān composed the following vaunting poem—though he has nothing, whether old or new, to vaunt of, except his poetry. He was a Nāṣibī, who insinuated in his poetry things against the family of the Messenger (peace be upon him and them).[34] {13}

Al-Farazdaq is the master of vaunting, but
the sweet and the bitter of poetry is Jarīr's.[35]
And al-Akhṭal, of the tribe of Taghlib, made hurtful invective
and captivated minds with his famed eloquence.
Each of the three triumphed with their panegyric
and invective verse, which spread far and wide.
I have run with those noble steeds and I outran them,
with the reins of a horse neither panting nor out of breath.[36]
No poets have attained from a caliph[37]
the high rank and prize-purses[38] that I have attained.
My words, all of them, are more powerful with kings
than what the living and the buried ever said.

34 The term Nāṣibiyyah or Ahl al-naṣb is used for fierce opponents of ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib and his kin. The verses are in Marwān, *Shiʿr*, 55–56 (13 vss.); Ibn Sallām, *Ṭabaqāt*, 318 (vss. 1–3); *Aghānī*, x, 90 (vss. 1–4, 8–9); al-Zajjājī, *Akhbār*, 118 (vss. 7–9); Ibn Rashīq, *ʿUmdah*, i, 86 (vss. 7–9).

35 Al-Farazdaq (d. 110/728) and Jarīr (d. 111/729), two major poets of the Umayyad period, are especially famous for their longstanding exchange of invective poems (*Naqāʾiḍ*). Instead of *fakhār* ("vaunting"). *Aghānī* has *hijāʾ* ("invective"). Al-Akhṭal (d. c. 92/710), mentioned in the next verse, is another major Umayyad poet. Abbott, *Studies in Arabic Literary Papyri, III*, 142, quoting vss. 1–3, calls it "mediocre verse". She notes that al-Farazdaq's wife Nawār had already voiced a similar view (al-Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān*, ii, 181): "He [scil., Jarīr] is superior to you in the sweet and your equal in the bitter."

36 Translation uncertain. The MS has *bi-ʿīnāni lā s.y.m wa-lā mabhūrī*; *Aghānī* has *bi-jirāʾi lā qarifin wa-lā mabhūrī*, Farrāj suggests reading *bi-ʿīnāni lā shabimin wa-lā mabhūrī*. Instead of *lā shabimin* ("not cold and hungry") I prefer to read *lā nahijin* ("not panting"), mentioned in Eghbal's note as suggested by Muṣṭafā Jawād.

37 I take *mustakhlaf* ("someone appointed as vicar or successor") to be an unusual synonym of *khalīfah*.

38 *Budūr*, plural of *bidrah*, "purse containing 10,000 (or 1000) dirhams", or the sum itself. Dirhams are also meant with "one million" in the following verse.

[47] I have been given one million, awarded
by none but a caliph or emir.[39]
I always disdain composing praise poems
except for those standing on a pulpit or sitting on a throne.
The envy of base people does not harm me. A man of merit
will always be envied by those who fall short.
I slake people's thirst with every brimful basin,
liberally, and my cauldrons are filled for the starving,
Always charitably containing food for guests,
consisting of a high-humped slaughtered camel.
I give voluntarily, time and again;
it is not much to me.
When I bellow with other stallions, anywhere,
my bellow shames the others.[40]

Also admired are the following verses by Marwān:[41]

O you who are at the rising of a sun and then at its setting,
munificence to you will not be repeated.
Say to those asking for favours: "Rest your camels after your quest:
after the death of Maʿn, the ally of generosity, there is no generosity!"
Say to Fate: "Leave no one alive,
for since Maʿn died, no deceased one will ever be missed."

This is from a famous long poem. I only quote short passages and choice verses; if one wishes to read the complete poems of poets, then their collected verses are readily available, especially of those famous ones who are known to most people. But of those whose poetry is only found with a select few we shall [48] include in this book ‖ a fair portion and an ample quantity, so that the book may be more complete in its usefulness. We shall quote longer poems by Marwān and those well-known poets in his class if these poems are seldom found with most people, such as his poem with rhyme letter K and similar poems of his collected verse. This is the poem on the rhyme letter K, beginning thus:[42]

39 Al-Zajjājī, *Akhbār* and Ibn Rashīq, *ʿUmdah* have "caliph or vizier".

40 *Qurūm* (plural of *qarm*) means also "leader, hero" but *hadara*, "to roar, growl, bray" normally applies to an animal. The poet continues the equine metaphor of vs. 4.

41 Marwān, *Shiʿr*, 40, not found elsewhere.

42 Marwān, *Shiʿr*, 73–77 (taken from Ibn al-Muʿtazz). The poem (with rhyme on *-ākā*) is dedicated to a son of Maʿn ibn Zāʾidah. As Ibn al-Muʿtazz suggests, it is probably not complete, because the customary blessings at the end are lacking.

Those two reproached you on account of Umm Mālik:[43]
upon the life of God, they have not been fair to you!
Each of your censors is devoid of what you
feel: their passion is not your passion.
They reproached you for being in love, but if they had experienced it
they would have helped you or forgiven you when you wept.
Whenever you said, "Don't blame me thus!" they said,
"Your infatuation is foolish, now that your hair has turned grey."
Greyness has disseminated its tillage on my head, when
its time of tilling came, and it has come over you.
Now get over Umm Mālik, restrain your heart that has
so often tormented you in its quest!
Time, after ten plus ten plus {14}
thirty years has thrown you over.
Whenever you see lightning towards Qurrān[44]
you are stirred by yearning and it makes you cry.
The woman you love has moved far away from you,
after she and her people were near you.
Young, white-skinned girls moved among them,
like gazelles reaching for the twigs of the arak trees.[45]
You were faithful to them, disobeying
every reviler who reviled you for loving them,
Even when you suffered agony in ardently loving them,
responding to passion when it summoned you.
Now stop thinking of them! And mention a high-minded man,
with the strands of whose rope you have knotted your strands!
Where (ah, nowhere!) is the like of Zā'idat al-Khayrāt,[46]
except for his father? No, where is that man?

43 A combination of two common old motifs: introducing a poem mentioning two unnamed friends (see also above, p. 45 and below, pp. 172, 174, 247), and reproach of the poet for his love of a woman. The poet addresses himself, another old convention.

44 Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-buldan*, s.v. and Abū ʿUbayd al-Bakrī, *Muʿjam*, 1063 mention several places called Qurrān, including one in al-Yamāmah, the region where Marwān was born.

45 The arak (*arāk*) tree (*Salvadora persica*) has always been and still is popular for its twigs, used as toothbrush-*cum*-toothpick.

46 Zā'idat al-Khayrāt ("the Zā'idah of Bounties") is Maʿn's son Zā'idah, a friend of the poet Abū l-ʿAtāhiyah, who composed elegies on him (see *Aghānī*, iv, 26, xv, 277, 282); he was his father's deputy in Yemen (al-Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, ii, 462, tr. *The Works*, 1119–1120). In vs. 30 Zā'idat al-Khayr (with the singular form) is mentioned as being an ancestor of the addressee of the poem, apparently meaning Maʿn's father Zā'idah.

Through Maʿn's son every Muslim[47] captive is ransomed,
who does not have to spend the night hoping to be ransomed.
[49] Through him every leader dies a violent death (?)[48]
when spear-points clash.
A brilliant man of the clan of Maṭar, who speaks
as custom demands and who abstains from foul speech.
Whoever seeks to harm his protégé will see his aim,
through his hands, to be unattainable like the stars.[49]
Your feet, son of Maʿn, never cease to stand firmly
in any place, wherever they are.
Maʿn defends the frontiers and spends
what he possesses on lofty deeds. And you too are like that.
It does not harm a man, when gaining your affection,
if he does not gain it from any other than you,
Excepting those who ask your father for boons. But any seeker
asking him also asks a boon from you.
Every man on earth would wish his father
were your father in vaunting his glory.
Valour and generosity are loyally bound to you,
just as you were loyal when they became your allies.
They responded to your call with "Here we are!",[50]
just as you responded when they called you.
Thus they are—besides those you give your pure affection
and treat as brothers—your two brothers.
As long as you shall live—loyalty is splendid—you will
not be unfaithful to them, nor they to you.
Your hands have always reached to the summits of exalted deeds,
higher than the hands of all kings.
In you a branch rose from the best stem
of Nizār,[51] so you grew up in fertile soil.

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47 The editions of the *Ṭabaqāt* and Marwān's *Shiʿr* have *muslam*, "abandoned, surrendered", which is possible, but I prefer to read *muslim* (cf. vs. 20, mentioning the frontiers).

48 The text has the unintelligible *t.fʿ.ḍu*; Farrāj, following Eghbal, suggests reading *yuqʿaṣu*.

49 He uses the singular al-Simāk instead of the dual, referring to Arcturus and Spica, as in the similar verse above, p. 68.

50 The exclamation *labbayka* ("here we are for you" or "at your service"), has strong religious connotations; used by pilgrims, it goes back to pre-Islamic times.

51 Nizār ibn Maʿadd ibn ʿAdnān is an ancestor of the "Northern Arab" tribes.

You rose with Maʿn, with Zāʾidat al-Khayr,
and with ʿAbd al-Ilāh: all these raised you,[52]
As the adornment of what they let precede.[53] You did not find it hard
to climb high on the ladders of their glory.
Nizār holds fast, with you all,[54] to a rope, [50]
not wanting to hold on to any other.
You mended its rifts with wisdom and forbearance
that gained the upper hand and prevented its ruin.
All Nizār pointed at you, saying,
"Only those will mend the rifts!"
For ages people despaired of attaining
your achievement in glorious deeds.
Just as Maʿn's father clothed him with the glory of the earlier
generous man, so Maʿn has clothed you.
So many that knew him imagine you to be
him, at other times imagining him to be you.
The surplus of his valour is known in your valour, {15}
just as your generosity is from the surplus of his.
All those who have seen him recognise the breath
of his bounty in you, when they see you.
He outstripped everyone in his course; then you
came second, just as he did after his own father,
His finish coming near the finish of his father,
just as your finish came in relation to his.
The bounteous gift of the Nile, the Nile in Egypt,
when its waters overflow, is not even like part of your bounty.
The benefaction of Abū l-Walīd[55] has been made even more complete
by the surplus of your bounteous benefaction.
Your anger means death, when you are angry; but
your pleasure, when you are pleased, is profit.
All those who obey have hope in you,
while every criminal fears you.

52 On Zāʾidat al-Khayr see vs. 14 above; his father was ʿAbd Allāh, for which ʿAbd al-Ilāh is apparently a variant due to the metre.

53 Following Farrāj in reading *zayna mā* instead of *raythamā*.

54 The poet shifts from 2nd-ps. sg. to the plural in vss. 32–35, returning to the singular in vs. 36.

55 Abū l-Walīd is Maʿn's *kunyah*.

For this poem, which is called *al-Gharrā'* (the Brilliant Poem),[56] Marwān re-
[51] ceived a large sum from Maʿn. It is said ‖ that no poet, whether ancient or modern, earned as much with his poetry as did Marwān. He would demand 100,000 dirhams from caliphs.[57]

Among his excellent major poems is this poem with rhyme letter L:[58]

She who showed herself to us on the day of departure
was like a gazelle of the sands, brown, with a calf;[59]
She, having much milk,[60] turns her gaze to the kohl-black-eyed one,
when she has left it behind her.

His poems are many and interesting stories about him abound. Abū Mālik told me, on the authority of his father, that ʿUbayd Allāh ibn Abī Rāfiʿ,[61] the *mawlā* of the Messenger of God (God bless and preserve him) and his family, went to al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī and said, "I am your *mawlā*." Formerly he had acted as secretary for ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib. A *mawlā* of Tammām ibn al-ʿAbbās ibn ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib[62] said on ʿUbayd Allāh:

You have denied the sons of al-ʿAbbās the right of their father,
for you have no claim to noble achievements!
Since when are daughters' sons like inheritors
taking possession and are claimed as fathers in lineages?[63]

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56 According to Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, v, 190 *al-Gharrā'* is the name of the poem by Marwān with rhyme letter L from which the verses quoted above ("The Banū Maṭar, of a day of battle …") are taken, as are the following two verses.

57 It is not said if this would be for one poem or more. *Aghānī* (x, 75) reports that he would ask one thousand dirhams for every panegyric verse; Ibn Khallikān (*Wafayāt*, v, 190) says, claiming to quote Ibn al-Muʿtazz, that Marwān once received 300,000 dirhams from an unnamed caliph for one single verse. He appears to have been a miser himself (*Aghānī*, x, 77–78).

58 Marwān, *Shiʿr*, 88.

59 This does not necessarily mean that the woman described had a child: the common comparison with a female gazelle with a calf merely stresses the loving nature of the woman.

60 I read *lābinun* instead of *lābinin* as in the editions.

61 On him see e.g. al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xix, 369. For the report and the following verses see Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 764–765, al-Mubarrad, *Kāmil*, ii, 124.

62 See al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, x, 396.

63 Al-Mubarrad comments: "He means that al-ʿAbbās had more right [than al-Ḥasan] to claim a *mawlā* of God's Messenger (God bless and preserve him) as his *mawlā*, because a paternal uncle is called 'father' in God's Book" (referring to Q al-Baqarah 2:133, where Ismāʿīl/Ishmael is mentioned among the "fathers" of Yaʿqūb/Jacob).

Marwān stole this motif and incorporated it in a poem, where he says:[64]

How could it be—but it cannot!—that
daughters' sons inherit like paternal uncles?

He was given a huge sum for this verse. Also admired is his elegy on Maʿn in which he mentions his good deeds:[65]

Maʿn is gone away, but he left noble deeds
that will not perish nor be attained again.
It is as if the sun, on the day Maʿn was struck,[66]
put on horsecloths of darkness.
He was the mountain with which Nizār [52]
demolished mountains of the enemy.
The frontier defences are impaired, missing Maʿn,
who used to quench bloodthirsty lances there.
Iraq has darkened; the overwhelming calamity
has bequeathed to it much damage.
Syria's flanks tremble since the cornerstone
of glory flagged and tottered.
All the lands of Tihāmah and Najd[67] have almost
ceased to exist since he ceased to be.
Though all lands lay low in submission to him,
they also rose high, taking pride in him.
Death struck, the day it struck Maʿn,
the noblest in good deeds of living beings.
All people, until he went to his grave,
were Maʿn's dependents,
And no one seeking beneficence ever intended {16}
to travel to anyone but Ibn Zā'idah.

64 For the nine verses preserved of this poem see Marwān, *Shiʿr*, 104. The verse is also quoted in *Aghānī*, iii, 222, x, 89, 94. Ibn Abī l-Iṣbaʿ, *Taḥrīr*, 236–237 judges a verse with the same motif ascribed to Ibn al-Muʿtazz (but not found in his *Dīwān*) to be superior to Marwān's ("You are sons of his daughter, below us, | but we are the sons of his Muslim paternal uncle").

65 Marwān, *Shiʿr*, 79–83 (54 verses, of which Ibn al-Muʿtazz quotes vss. 1–15, 17–20, 24, 29–30, 33, 27, 37. 39, 41–42, 44–45, 49, 52–54); see also Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh*, lvii, 296–299, Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, v, 249–253.

66 Maʿn was killed by some Khārijites who had disguised themselves as workmen.

67 Tihāmah is the lowland of the west coast of the Arabian Peninsula; Najd is central plateau.

Gone is he who carried every burden
and whose overflowing gifts came before being asked.
There was no one like Maʿn to whom visitors took themselves,
or at whose courtyard they loosened their saddles.
The hands of those bestowing gifts never reached
his hands, neither the right nor the left.
His cisterns of beneficence never dried up,
always filled to the brim with bucketfuls.
Would that those who gloat were his ransom!
Would that his lifespan had been stretched and lengthened!
His treasury did not contain gold,
but swords of Indian make, long coats of mail,[68]
And slender, brown Khaṭṭī spears,[69]
seen to be supple and straight,
And a store of lasting laudable deeds
and a surplus of gifts by which he achieved excellence.[70]
[53] Gone away is he by whom you hoped
the stumblings of your time would be steadied.
A woman, seeing that both my body and my complexion
had changed, altered from how she knew them,
Said, "I see that Marwān has become as if turning thin,
like an Indian sword that has long not been burnished!"
She saw a man so much pared down by sorrow
that it affected him badly, leaving him senseless.
Days of fatal Fate have their coming and turning,
tossing a man from one state to another.
It is, after Maʿn's death, as if a long night has followed
straight after other nights, joined with it.
So alas, my father, for you,[71] now that gifts
have been made into false promises and excuses!

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68 Swords of good quality are often called "Indian". Instead of *al-ḥalaqa l-f.ḍālā* (?), I read *al-ḥalaqa l-mudhālā* with e.g. Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, v, 250; al-Tujībī, *al-Mukhtār min shiʿr Bashshār*, 22; al-Wāḥidī in his commentary on al-Mutanabbī, *Dīwān*, 713.

69 Khaṭṭī is a common epithet of spears, said to be called after a place in Oman.

70 Instead of *luhā* ("gifts") other sources (Marwān, *Shiʿr*, 80, Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, v, 250) have *tuqā* ("piety").

71 The repeated *lahfa abī ʿalā* (seven times in the complete poem) is unusual (far more common is e.g. *lahfa nafsī*, "Alas, my soul!"). See WKAS, *Lām*, 1528b (with verses by Marwān and a few verses with *lahfa ummī ʿalā*, "Alas, my mother, for …" by other poets). The poet means his own father, not the deceased Maʿn.

Alas, my father, for you, now that orphans
look dishevelled and as if suffering from consumption!
Alas, my father, for you, for every battle
such that the nursing women drop their dear new-born babies![72]
Alas my father, for you, now that rhymes
in praise of a patron have gone astray!
We stayed in al-Yamāmah when we despaired
of a position that we did not wish to abandon.
"Where shall we go", we said, "after Maʿn's death,
now that gifts are gone? No gift is left."
The Caliph will remember you, not angrily,
since in his affairs he has put men to the test.
Umayyah's brother[73] has donated elegies to you
with the panegyrics that he has composed.
He stays where he is, whereas he came to you each year,
tying up his camel saddle for a long time in Wāsiṭ.
He cast down his saddle in sorrow and swore
an oath that he would never tie it again.

Marwān's poems are very numerous and if we wished to quote all the highlights of his poetry the book would be too long. Therefore we have quoted only a few of them, not wanting to exceed the limit that we set ourselves, being concise and brief.

72 *Sikhāl*, usually "lambs", may also mean "infants dear to their parents", as here; the mothers drop their children in panic (I thank Nefeli Paoutsakis for pointing this out).

73 It is not clear why the poet calls himself thus (assuming he is talking about himself).

[54] **6 Abū Dulāmah**[1]

His name is Zand, with N, ibn al-Jawn. Some say it is Zayd, with Y, reading the name wrongly;[2] scholars transmit it with N. Abū Dulāmah was a naturally gifted, proficient, and witty poet, whose verse contains many pleasantries. He could compose poetry extempore. He could compete with poets in all genres,
{17} but was without equal in the description of wine, gardens, ‖ and like subjects, where others could not vie with him. He was a panegyrist of caliphs.

Abū Mālik ʿUbayd Allāh ibn Muḥammad told us that his father said:[3] When Abū l-ʿAbbās al-Saffāḥ died, Abū Dulāmah went to Abū Jaʿfar al-Manṣūr,[4] while people in his presence were offering condolences. Then Abū Dulāmah recited:[5]

In al-Anbār you, Ibn Muḥammad,
  became unable to turn to other lands.[6]
Alas and woe for you, alas for all my people,
  an alas that will last until death!
Generosity has died since you died, Ibn Muḥammad,
  and you assigned the like of it to the earth.
I have begged, after your death, from all people, but
  even the most openhanded I saw I found to be stingy.
Is it to my misery that I have been spared, after your death,
  only for those who will let my plump dependents turn thin?

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1 Abū Dulāmah (d. 161/778 or some years later) is present in the sources more as a buffoon and jester at the court of the early Abbasid caliphs than as a poet. Entries on him are in Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 776–778; *Aghānī*, x, 234–272; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, ix, 517–522; Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabā'*, xi, 165–168; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntaẓam*, viii, 251–253; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, ii, 320–327; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, 216–221; *GAS*, ii, 470–471, ix, 289; *EAL*, 30; *EI2*, i, 116–117; al-Najjār, *Shuʿarā' ʿAbbāsiyyūn mansiyyūn*, II, iii, 317–330. For a monograph on him see Ben Cheneb, *Abû Dolâma*.

2 In unvowelled Arabic the difference between Zayd (a very common name) and Zand (very rare) is merely a few dots. It is said that his *kunyah*, Abū Dulāmah, rather then being a teknonym, refers to a mountain of that name near Mecca (*Aghānī*, x, 237).

3 See *Aghānī*, x, 240–242, quoting Ibn al-Muʿtazz; al-Bayhaqī, *Maḥāsin*, 488; al-Ḥuṣrī, *Jamʿ al-jawāhir*, 107–109.

4 Al-Saffāḥ, who died in 136/754, was succeeded by his brother al-Manṣūr.

5 *Aghānī*, x, 240–241 (seven verses); al-Ḥuṣrī, *Jamʿ*, 108 (nine); Abū Dulāmah, *Dīwān*, 90–91 (ten).

6 Al-Saffāḥ died in his residence, al-Anbār, a town on the Euphrates, not far from where his brother and successor al-Manṣūr would build the new residence, Baghdad, on the Tigris. Both brothers could be called Ibn Muḥammad, but the poet means the deceased.

His poem made everyone cry. But al-Manṣūr was very angry and said, "If I hear you ever reciting this poem again, I'll cut off your tongue!" Abū Dulāmah replied, "Abū l-ʿAbbās has honoured me; it was he who brought me from the desert,[7] just as God brought ‖ the brothers of Yūsuf (peace be upon him) to [55]
him. So please say as he said: *There shall be no reproach on you today. God will forgive you; He is the most merciful of the merciful.*"[8] The Caliph said, "We forgive you! Ask what you need!" Abū Dulāmah said, "Abū l-ʿAbbās, during his sickness, once gave orders for me to be given ten thousand dirhams and fifty robes, but I never received them." Al-Manṣūr said, "And who knows about this?" Abū Dulāmah answered, "Those!", pointing at a number of those present. Sulaymān ibn Mujālid and Abū l-Jahm[9] stood up and said, "Abū Dulāmah speaks the truth, Commander of the Believers, we know about the matter!" Then al-Manṣūr said to Abū Ayyūb, the treasurer,[10] "Sulaymān, give him those things! And enlist him in the army that is going to fight that usurper!" He meant ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAlī, who had openly rebelled in Syria, rallying people to him, and had gathered a great number of men and those remaining followers of Marwān among the Syrians.[11] Al-Manṣūr feared that his power would continue to grow. Abū Dulāmah, springing to his feet, said, "Commander of the Believers! God be my refuge, please do not make me go out with that army! I swear to God, I bring bad luck!" But al-Manṣūr replied, "My own good luck will overcome your bad luck, so go with the army!" Abū Dulāmah answered, "I would prefer that you did not put it to the test, for I don't know which of the two possible outcomes it will be. I am not sure my bad luck will be overcome!" "Enough!", said the Caliph, "You shall march with the army." Abū Dulāmah said, "Commander of the Believers, I swear to God I am telling the truth: I have seen with my own eyes nine armies

7 Or "from the Bedouins" (*min al-badw*). Abū Dulāmah came in fact from Kufa, the son of a freed black slave.

8 Q Yūsuf 12:92; Yūsuf/Joseph addresses his brothers who have reached him in Egypt and confess they have sinned against him.

9 Sulaymān ibn Mujālid, foster-brother of al-Manṣūr, was his treasurer; see Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh*, xxii, 365–367. Abū l-Jahm ibn ʿAṭiyyah was soon to be involved in the plot against Abū Muslim but criticised al-Manṣūr for having him killed, and he was poisoned at the orders of al-Manṣūr (al-Jahshiyārī, *Wuzarāʾ*, 93–94, 112, 136–137).

10 Abū Ayyūb Sulaymān ibn Makhlad al-Mūriyānī (d. 154/771) was al-Manṣūr's secretary and treasurer and is often called the first vizier although it appears he was not formally appointed as such; see *EI2*, vii, 628, "al-Mūriyānī" (C.E. Bosworth).

11 ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAlī ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-ʿAbbās (d. 147/764), paternal uncle of al-Saffāḥ and al-Manṣūr, had refused allegiance to them, claiming that he was more entitled to be caliph on account of his contribution to the Abbasid successes. See *EI3*, "ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAlī" (J. Lassner). Marwān ibn Muḥammad was the last Umayyad caliph.

all of which were defeated. God forbid that it will be the tenth!" Then Abū Jaʿfar burst out laughing and ordered him to stay in Kufa with ʿĪsā ibn Mūsā.[12]

Muḥammad ibn Khālid al-Baṣrī told me: Ibn Abī l-ʿAwjāʾ told me: When Mūsā ibn Dāwūd ibn ʿAlī ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-ʿAbbās[13] wanted to go on hajj,
[56] he called for ‖ Abū Dulāmah. "Get ready", he told him, "and go with me on this blessed journey that is the pilgrimage!" He gave him ten thousand dirhams, saying, "If you have any debts, pay them and leave your family enough to live on." Mūsā hoped to meet up with him as equals and to enjoy hearing what he could tell, his pleasantries and curious anecdotes, for he had been intimate with the high and mighty. Abū Dulāmah took the money and gave a positive response.
{18} But when Mūsā was ready to go and asked for Abū Dulāmah ‖ he could not be found. Mūsā searched for him and was told that he was in the countryside near Kufa, frequenting the taverns of wine-merchants. Mūsā, afraid of missing the hajj, said, "Leave him to God's curse!" and left. Near al-Qādisiyyah,[14] yes! there he saw Abū Dulāmah leaving a village on his way to al-Ḥīrah. "Bring me that sinner, the enemy of God" he exclaimed, "He fled from Truth to falsehood, from the hajj to the winesellers' taverns!" When Abū Dulāmah was taken to him, he had him bound and thrown into a camel litter. They travelled on, and Abū Dulāmah began to recite:

People! Say, all together now:
"God bless Mūsā ibn Dāwūd!"
His cheeks shine as if made of gold[15]
when he appears in his black clothes.
Your father was generosity itself, as we knew him,
and you, of all God's creatures, most resemble generosity.
I was informed that the road of pilgrimage makes one thirsty
for wine. And I didn't stop drinking before I had my fill!
By God, there is no good in me so that you could look for me
among Muslims. My religion is not praiseworthy.

12 ʿĪsā ibn Mūsā ibn Muḥammad (d. 167/783–784) was a paternal cousin of the caliph. In a much shorter version of the anecdote in Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, ii, 321 the caliph is said to be al-Mahdī instead of al-Manṣūr.

13 Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh*, lx, 408. His father Dāwūd (wrongly spelled D.w.wād in Farrāj's edition) was a paternal uncle of the caliph. Mūsā was briefly governor of Medina but deposed by al-Saffāḥ. For the following see *Aghānī*, x, 246; al-Bayhaqī, *Maḥāsin*, 356–357; al-Ḥuṣrī, *Jamʿ*, 109–110.

14 A place near the old town al-Ḥīrah and the new Muslim town of Kufa; a famous victory of the Muslims over the Sasanids took place at al-Qādisiyyah c. 16/637.

15 Literally, "the brocade of his two cheeks (*dībājatay khaddayhi*) is as if of gold".

I seek refuge with Dāwūd and his grave
against pilgrimage with reluctance, Ibn Dāwūd!

Then Mūsā said, "Throw him out of the litter, God curse him, and let him go where he wants!" They did, and he went his own way. He stayed in that region until he had spent all that money. When Mūsā was on his way back, Abū Dulāmah went to him to congratulate him. Mūsa said, "You wretch! ‖ What about all those scenes that you have missed!" But Abū Dulāmah answered, "I have not missed the best of them!", meaning the taverns.[16] [57]

Ibn Dāwūd told me:[17] al-ʿAwfī told me:[18] Abū Dulāmah entered into the presence of al-Mahdī, when ʿĪsā ibn Mūsā, al-ʿAbbās ibn Muḥammad, and some other members of the Banū Hāshim were with him.[19] Al-Mahdī said to him, "Compose a lampoon on anyone of us, of your choice!"[20] Abū Dulāmah looked closely at the men, but each time his eye caught the eye of one of them, the latter would wink as if to say, you and I are friends, don't do it! Abū Dulāmah took some time and then said,[21]

Hey, inform Abū Dulāmah, who's with you there:
You are not among the noble, no way![22]
You have gathered all ugliness and baseness;
that's how it is: baseness is followed by ugliness.
If you, little lout, get your hands on money,
you're in a state as if it were the Last Day!
—When he puts on a turban you'd say: "A monkey!"
And "A swine!" when it takes off the turban.

16 The conventional sequel to such anecdotes is added by al-Bayhaqī ("He liked this and ordered a reward for him") and al-Ḥuṣrī ("He laughed and gave him a reward"), but it is not in Ibn al-Muʿtazz's version.

17 Again, Dāwūd is misspelled as D.w.wād.

18 Compare the versions in *Aghānī*, x, 258; al-Ḥuṣrī, *Jamʿ*, 110–111; Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, vi, 439.

19 Al-Mahdī, al-Manṣūr's son and successor as caliph, reigned 158–169/775–785. Al-ʿAbbās ibn Muḥammad (d. 186/802) was yet another brother of al-Saffāḥ and al-Manṣūr.

20 In *Aghānī* the Caliph threatens to cut off his tongue or even behead him if he would not comply, whereas in *Jamʿ al-jawāhir* he promises a reward for the lampoon.

21 Vss. 1 and 4 are ascribed to Abū ʿAṭāʾ al-Sindī in a different anecdote in al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, ix, 518, Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, ii, 326.

22 For the expression *wa-lā karāmah* see WKAS, *Kāf*, 144a.

Al-Mahdī laughed, amazed at how adeptly he extricated himself from what he been forced to do. Not a single one of the men failed to reward him and give him something.

Abū Dulāmah went with Rawḥ ibn Ḥātim on a campaign in some war.[23] When the two sides met in battle Abū Dulāmah said, "If I could ride a horse like those of yours, and have one thousand dinars on me, I would seriously distress your enemy, bravely and boldly!" Rawḥ said, "Give him all that!" When Abū Dulāmah took them, he said,

I seek refuge in Rawḥ, let him not put me in the vanguard
to do battle, lest the Banū Asad will be unhappy because of me![24]
Al-Muhallab bequeathed to your kin a love of death,
but I have not inherited bravery in battle from anyone.

Rawḥ, who was an erudite poet as well as a brave hero, a true lion, replied,

Take it easy, for I do not want you in the heat of the fray
stabbing, attacking, striking.
{19} Stand right behind the army
and be off with those who flee if you are routed!

[58] Muḥammad ibn al-Ṣalt al-Kūfī told me:[25] Abū Dulāmah litigated with a man before ʿĀfiyah, the judge of Abū Jaʿfar al-Manṣūr. The man accused Abū Dulāmah of something and the judge asked the latter, "What do you say?" Abū Dulāmah replied, "Listen first!" He recited these verses:

Clever men have litigated with me
but I litigated with them fully according to good custom.[26]

23 Compare the different and much longer version in *Aghānī*, x, 243–245 (mentioning a campaign against the Khārijites); see also Ṣāʿid al-Rabaʿī, *Fuṣūṣ*, iv, 222–223; al-Bayhaqī, *Maḥāsin*, 487–488; al-Ḥuṣrī, *Jamʿ*, 100; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntaẓam*, viii, 253; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, ii, 323. Rawḥ ibn Ḥātim ibn Qabīṣah ibn al-Muhallab (d. 174/791) served under the first five Abbasid caliphs as general or governor; see *EI2*, viii, 465–466, "Rawḥ b. Ḥātim" (M. Talbi). On the descendants of al-Muhallab ibn Abī Ṣufrah, see *EI2*, vii, 358–359, "Muhallabids" (P. Crone).

24 Most other sources have "will be disgraced because of me". Abū Dulāmah was a *mawlā* of the tribe of Asad.

25 *Aghānī*, x, 257. On ʿĀfiyah ibn Yazīd see al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, xiv, 254–258, where this anecdote is quoted (257) and where al-Mahdī is said to have appointed him as judge.

26 Following the vowelling in the editions of Farrāj and al-Ṭabbāʿ (*sunnatan wāfiyah*). In *Agh-*

God did not invalidate any of my arguments,
nor did God cause any rhyme of mine to fail.
I may fear the injustice of some in his jurisdiction,
but I am not afraid of you, ʿĀfiyah!

ʿĀfiyah said angrily, "I shall complain about you to the Commander of the Believers!" Abū Dulāmah replied, "But why would you complain?" "Because you have lampooned me!" Abū Dulāmah said, "Then, may God depose you!" "And why should He depose me?" "Because you can't tell praise from lampooning."[27]

He also told me[28] that Abū Dulāmah composed a panegyric on al-Mahdī. When he recited it to him the Caliph was pleased. "Ask what you wish!" he said. "Commander of the Believers," said Abū Dulāmah, "let me be given a hunting dog!" "You son of a stupid woman!" replied the Caliph, "What will you do with a hunting dog? What kind of request is this?" "Commander of the Believers, [is it my request or yours?" "No, it's yours." "Well, I am asking you to give me a hunting dog." So the Caliph gave orders that he be given a dog. Then Abū Dulāmah said, "Commander of the Believers,][29] if I should fancy to go out hunting, should I go on foot?" So the Caliph ordered a horse for him. Abū Dulāmah asked, "And who should groom the horse?" So the Caliph said, "Give him a groom!" "And who should cook the spoils of the hunt for us?" "Give him a cook!" "And who should feed all those people?" "Allot to him eighty acres of arable land and eighty acres of inarable land!"[30] "What does 'inarable' mean, Commander of the Believers?" "That nothing will grow there." "In that case, I allot to the Commander of the Believers forty thousand acres of the desert of Muzayqiyā!"[31]

ānī and *Tārīkh Madīnat al-Salām* it is *sanatan wāfiyah* ("for a full year"). Both readings are metrically possible.

27 *Aghānī* adds the expected standard ending: "When al-Manṣūr heard about this he laughed and gave orders for Abū Dulāmah to be given a reward."

28 For versions of this often quoted story see al-Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥayawān*, ii, 170–171 (where the caliph is al-Saffāḥ); Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 776 (also with al-Saffāḥ); Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, i, 263–264; *Aghānī*, x, 236–237 (where the source is al-Jāḥiẓ but the caliph is al-Manṣūr); al-Bayhaqī, *Maḥāsin*, 587; al-Ḥuṣrī, *Jamʿ*, 111 (where the story is the sequel to Abū Dulāmah's autoinvective quoted above); Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, ii, 321. For a similar, shorter version where 14 verses for al-Manṣūr are quoted see *Aghānī*, x, 237–238, and see al-Jahshiyārī, *Wuzarāʾ*, 96–97, with three verses. More sources are given in Marzolph, *Arabia ridens*, ii, 23 (no. 86).

29 This and a few subsequent parentheses, taken from Ibn Khallikān, are added by Farrāj.

30 The Arabic has "two hundred *jarībs*", twice, a *jarīb* being (at the time) c. 1600 m² or c. 0.4 acre. See Hinz, *Measures and Weights*, 96–97. The words for "arable" and "inarable" are *ʿāmirah* and *ghāmirah*, respectively, the latter being a somewhat rare word for "wasteland".

31 This is clearly a non-existent location. Muzayqiyā (or Muzayqiyāʾ) is the nickname of ʿAmr ibn ʿĀmir Māʾ al-Samāʾ, ancestor of many branches of Qaḥṭān, see Ibn al-Kalbi, *Ǧam-*

"Then where would you want me to locate them for you?" "Give me half an
[59] acre from the Treasury!" ‖ "On condition that you will not take anything from it!" "But then it will be 'inarable'!" The Caliph laughed and said, "We make them all arable then!" Abū Dulāmah said, "Commander of the Believers, give me your hand so that I can kiss it!" "No, not that!" "I swear to God," replied Abū Dulāmah, "I have never denied my family anything that was easier to them than this!" The Caliph laughed until he fell over backwards.[32]

Abū Mālik ʿUbayd Allāh ibn Muḥammad told me, on the authority of his father,[33] that Abū Dulāmah recited poetry to Abū Jaʿfar al-Manṣūr, who admired it. The Caliph's boon companions who were present made a show of their admiration in hyperbolic terms. Abū Dulāmah said, "I swear to God, Commander of the Believers, that they cannot tell bad poetry from good. They express their admiration only because you do! If you wish, I can prove it to you." "Go ahead!" said the Caliph. Then Abū Dulāmah recited:[34]

> I describe a foal, perfect in its worth,
> Its perineum set in its back …

When he had finished reciting the poem, they expressed their admiration. "Didn't I tell you, Commander of the Believers?" said Abū Dulāmah. Al-Manṣūr said, "I swear to God, Abū Dulāmah was right! How could its perineum be on its back?!"

Al-Ḥanafī said:[35] Abū Dulāmah, man of curious anecdotes, went on a hunt together with al-Mahdī and ʿAlī ibn Sulaymān.[36] Al-Mahdī shot an arrow and hit a gazelle; ʿAlī ibn Sulaymān shot too and hit a hunting dog. Al-Mahdī laughed and looked at Abū Dulāmah, saying, "Surely you've found something to say. Let us hear it and you can state your reward!" Abū Dulāmah said,

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harat an-nasab, Tables 176, 193–203. This ʿAmr Muzayqiyā plays a part in the legend of the catastrophic bursting of the dam at Marib in Yemen; see *EI2*, vi, 559–567, "Mārib" (W.W. Müller), esp. 564b.

32 For an exhaustive study of this and many similar formulas, see Müller, "*Und der Kalif lachte, bis er auf den Rücken fiel*".

33 The anecdote is in Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 776–777. In Ṣāʿid, *Fuṣūṣ*, v, 21–21 the poet is the famous *rajaz* poet Ruʾbah ibn al-ʿAjjāj and the caliph is al-Saffāḥ (but the verses, three instead of two, are not found in Ruʾbah's *Dīwān*).

34 Most likely, Abū Dulāmah composed these verses for the occasion. The ascription to Ruʾbah, mentioned above, is dubious.

35 The anecdote is in Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 778; idem, *ʿUyūn*, i, 182–183; Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, vi, 438–439; *Aghānī*, vi, 240, x, 258; al-Ḥuṣrī, *Jamʿ*, 111–112; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, ix, 520–521; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, ii, 326.

36 ʿAlī ibn Sulaymān ibn ʿAlī ibn ʿAbd Allāh (d. 172/788–789), paternal cousin of al-Manṣūr.

Al-Mahdī shot a gazelle,
piercing its heart with an arrow.
And ʿAlī ibn Sulaymān
shot a dog and caught it.
Bon appetit to you both, {20}
each man to his own provision!

Al-Mahdī burst out laughing and said to ʿAlī ibn Sulaymān, "You can say what [60]
his reward should be!" ʿAlī answered, "I implore you, please no, Commander of the Believers!", but the Caliph said, "You must!" "Then," said ʿAlī, "I make Abū Dulāmah the judge of that." "All right then", said the Caliph. And ʿAlī ransomed himself with a sum of money.

Abū l-ʿAbbās ibn Muḥammad told us: Muḥammad ibn Manṣūr said to me: Saʿīd ibn Muslim said to me: I have never seen a poet with finer apparel than Abū Dulāmah, or with more obvious manliness,[37] or cleaner clothes.

Among his admired poems is the ode that is both an elegy on al-Manṣūr and a congratulatory ode on al-Mahdī's accession. In each verse he expressed the two things. It is a good poem; he says in it what follows:[38]

Two eyes: one is seen to be cheerful,
happy with its Imam;[39] the other dripping with tears.
Eyes that now weep, then laugh: what they have seen
pains them; what they know cheers them.
It pains that the Caliph died, while on pilgrimage,[40]
it cheers that this most compassionate man reigns.
Never have I seen or heard, as I see now,
that I comb my hair down in part, and tear it out!
The Caliph, O community of Aḥmad,[41] has passed away,
and now has come to you one to take his place.
God has bestowed on this man an excellent Caliphate;
on account of this the Gardens of Bliss are adorned.
So weep for the death of the best one of you, your guardian,
and look out for the reign of the other and pride yourself!

37 *Murūʾah*, which may also mean "chivalry, decency, virtue".
38 Only these seven verses have been preserved. See Abū Dulāmah, *Dīwān*, 82–83; Ibn Ṭabāṭabā, *ʿIyār*, 128–129; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, iii, 384 (vss. 1–6).
39 *Imām*, "leader", is often used for the caliph by Sunni Muslims.
40 Al-Manṣūr died on the road to Mecca in Dhū l-Ḥijjah 158/October 775.
41 Aḥmad is another name of the Prophet Muḥammad.

Naṣr ibn Muḥammad al-Khazarī told me, on the authority of some transmitter of reports: Abū l-ʿAbbās al-Saffāḥ was fond of Abū Dulāmah and would not be separated from him day or night, on account of his erudition, his fine poetry, his many pleasantries, and his knowledge of reports and events about people. Abū Dulāmah was a rake and a libertine; he would flee from the Caliph and go to the taverns of the wine-sellers to drink with his friends. He disliked the assemblies[42] with caliphs, because of the trouble and effort they took, always having
[61] to be on one's guard. ‖ He liked to feel relaxed and talk freely, which was not possible in an audience with a caliph; so he fled. Abū l-ʿAbbās al-Saffāḥ reproached him for this, saying,[43] "Damn you, I see you avoid us and our sessions, you flee from us! I wonder why!" Abū Dulāmah replied, "Commander of the Believers, all good things, honour, glory, and excellence are found only in sitting together with you, or standing at your doors, or being always in your service. But, in spite of all this, we would not like you to get bored with us. So we kept a low profile for a while, so that we might longer stay fresh to you, as it were." Abū l-ʿAbbās said, "But I was never bored with you! It is not as you describe. But you regularly visit the taverns of the wine-sellers, with profligates and libertines!" He assigned someone to keep an eye on him, to stay with him all the time, and even to perform all the ritual prayers with him. This was irksome to Abū Dulāmah, who said,

Don't you know, woman, that the Caliph tied me
to the mosque and the palace—what have I to do with the palace?
I pray the first salat there, with the afternoon one, untiringly,
woe to me for the first, and woe to me for the afternoon!
He[44] keeps me away from an assembly where I can enjoy myself,
alternatingly listening to music and drinking wine.
I swear to God, I have no intention to perform prayer,
being pious, doing good, and being good: that's not my thing.
{21} What harm would it be to him (may God rectify his doing!)
if the sins of all people were on my back?

42 *Majālis*, pl. of *majlis*, "session, assembly, meeting, audience, (literary) salon", etc.; see for instance *EI2*, v, 1031–1033, "Madjlis. i. In Social and Cultural Life", Ali, *Arabic Literary Salons*.

43 See the version in al-Ḥuṣrī, *Jamʿ*, 112–113; *Aghānī*, x, 247–248 (where the caliph is Abū Jaʿfar al-Manṣur, "but others say it was Abū l-ʿAbbās al-Saffāḥ"); al-Jahshiyārī, *Wuzarāʾ*, 144–115; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, ii, 321–322.

44 In other versions, among them *Aghānī*, the subject is explicitly "the Caliph", mentioned in the preceding verse.

When Abū l-ʿAbbās heard these verses he said, "I swear to God, this fellow is incorrigible! Let him stay with his friends!"

The following is from a lampoon by Abū Dulāmah on ʿAlī ibn Ṣāliḥ, who had promised to give him something but had failed to do so:[45]

ʿAlī ibn Ṣāliḥ ibn ʿAlī would have nobility,[46]
 if only he would help it by means of magnanimity.
His promises are winds: can you grasp
 winds with your hands?
Ṣāliḥ's sons are many, but to us, [62]
 among their large number, there's no good,[47]
Apart from Faḍl, for Faḍl has evident excellence
 over the Quraysh of the Valleys.[48]

Well-known and good verses by him are the following:[49]

If people could ever sit above the sun in nobility,
 it would be said, "Be seated, Family of al-ʿAbbās!"
Then they would rise, in the sun's beams, and ascend
 to the sky. You are the lords of all people!

Abū Dulāmah had a pampered little daughter called [Umm Dulām].[50] The moment she was born, he said,

45 *Aghānī*, x, 257 (3 vss.). Vss. 1–2 are attributed to Khaṭṭāb ibn al-Muʿallā al-Laythī "Anf al-Kalb" (Dog's Nose) in al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xiii, 345–356, quoting al-Marzubānī. The addressee is there called ʿAlī ibn Ṣāliḥ ibn ʿAlī al-Hāshimī. His brother al-Faḍl is al-Faḍl ibn Ṣāliḥ ibn ʿAlī ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAbbās, governor under al-Mahdī, see al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xxiv, 49. They were paternal cousins of al-Saffāḥ and al-Manṣūr.

46 Instead of *ḥasab*, "nobility" (whether by descent or personally acquired) *Aghānī* has *nasab* "(noble) lineage"; see *EI2*, iii, 238–239, "ḥasab wa-nasab".

47 This and the following verse contain play on roots (*figura etymologica*): Ṣāliḥ and *ṣalāḥ* ("good conduct, probity, righteousness"), Faḍl and *faḍl* ("superiority, excellence, graciousness, merit").

48 Quraysh al-Biṭāḥ, the branches of Quraysh that settled near the Kaaba.

49 On these verses and the following anecdote, see Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, i, 260–261; *Aghānī*, x, 239–240 (followed by a third verse); Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh*, xxxii, 328–329; Yamūt ibn al-Muzarraʿ, *Amālī*, 28; al-Ḥuṣrī, *Jamʿ*, 102 (only the verses on the daughter).

50 Added by Farrāj without giving a source, possibly from Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh*. But in a poem quoted in *Aghānī*, x, 237, Abū Dulāmah calls his wife Umm al-Dulāmah (*sic*, with the article and feminine ending).

You were not born to Mary, mother of Jesus,
nor will Luqmān the Sage provide for you,[51]
But a bad mother will hold you
to her breast, and a base father.[52]

Abū Dulāmah composed a widely known poem on Abū Muslim, spokesman of the Abbasid revolution.[53] He had threatened to kill him because of some thing or other that he had heard about him. When al-Manṣūr had him killed, Abū Dulāmah went to him, while Abū Muslim's head was on a platter, and recited:[54]

Abū Mujrim,[55] God does not change the blessings
for His servants until the servant himself changes them![56]
Abū Mujrim, you scared me with murder, but the Lion
pounced on you with what you scared me with.
You attempted treason to the rule of al-Manṣūr?
Well, your Kurdish ancestors were treacherous people.

Abū Dulāmah quotes his wife in the following verses:[57]

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51 Luqmān is a legendary sage, mentioned in the Qur'an (Q Luqmān 31:12–13).

52 In *Aghānī*, Abū Dulāmah composes two verses on his baby daughter who has wet his clothes: "You wet my clothes, | may you not live and may a cursed devil piss on you! || You were not born …" (etc.); then he asks the poet Abū ʿAṭāʾ al-Sindī to continue the poem; he says, "You are right, Abū Dulāmah, she was not born | to a pure woman or a noble male, || But a bad mother took her | to her breast, and a base father."

53 Abū Muslim, probably of Persian descent (but called Kurdish in Abū Dulāmah's poem), was the effective leader of the Abbasid movement that began in Khorasan and ended with the overthrow of the Umayyads. Al-Manṣūr got rid of him in 137/755 (see e.g. al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, iii, 99–117, tr. *The History*, xxviii, 18–41, Muḥammad ibn Ḥabīb, *Asmāʾ al-mughtālīn / Prominent Murder Victims*, 194–199, and many other sources).

54 Al-Balādhurī, *Jumal*, iv, 273–274 (six verses); Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 778; idem, *Maʿārif*, 430; idem, *ʿUyūn*, i, 26; *Aghānī*, x, 235 (vss. 2, 1); Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, ii, 320 (vss. 2, 1), and many other sources.

55 Replacing "Muslim" (as in most other sources of this verse) with the word for "criminal"; the same in Ibn Qutaybah's works quoted in the previous note, and already used in prose by Marwān ibn Muḥammad al-Jaʿdī before the Abbasid victory, see ps.-al-Jāḥiẓ, *Tāj*, 176.

56 Alluding to Q al-Raʿd 13:11: *God does not change what is in people until they change what is in themselves*.

57 *Aghānī*, x, 237–238 (13 verses, of which Ibn al-Muʿtazz quotes vss. 10–13); see also Ṣāʿid al-Rabaʿī, *Fuṣūṣ*, iv, 225; al-Ḥuṣrī, *Jamʿ*. 100–101. Abū Dulāmah recited his poem (in which he describes his wife as "misshapen, ugly, with floppy belly and crooked joints") to al-Manṣūr and was rewarded with the "arable and inarable acres", a variant of the story given above.

I begged her, by God's Book, to be respectable,
but she was not deterred by God's Book.[58]
She stuck her nose in the air and said, angrily,
"Are you reciting God's Book to me, you oaf?
Get you gone, seek yourself a palm grove and a plantation,
just as our neighbours have palm trees and plantations!
Go to the Caliph, and trick him with some beggary;
the Caliph may be cheated by beggars!"[59]

The stories about Abū Dulāmah are numerous, as are his poems, but what we have quoted should be sufficient, and there's an end.

58 This verse is quoted anonymously in al-Khalīl, *ʿAyn*, ii, 142, reading *lam takun bi-kitābi llāhi tartaqiʿū*, "she didn't care about God's Book", instead of *lam takun … tartadiʿū*.

59 This verse is quoted anonymously in al-Jāḥiẓ, *Rasāʾil*, iv, 192 (from his *Risālah fī l-mawaddah wa-l-khulṭah*) and, attributed to Abū Dulāmah, in al-Āmidī, *Muwāzanah*, iii, 249.

[63] 7 **Abū Nukhaylah**[1]

Abū Isḥāq al-Nawfalī said:[2] Abū Nukhaylah built a house that he had already sold. He went to Khālid ibn Ṣafwān and said, "I would like you to come with me and look at the building." Khālid went with him and when he had entered and saw it, Abū Nukhaylah asked him, "What do you think of it?" Khālid answered, "If I am honest, Abū Nukhaylah, you'll be angry." "I am not like that!" replied the other. Khālid, who was one of the most eloquent of all people, said,[3] "I see that you are begging importunately[4] and spending extravagantly. You have filled one hand with excrement and opened the other, saying, 'If you do not richly fill my open hand I'll fill you with excrement!' " Abū Nukhaylah, ashamed, did not reply.

{22} Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm al-Ḥanẓalī said: Abū Nukhaylah only praised ‖ caliphs or viziers. He was one of the most eloquent men and best poets, naturally talented, able to compose original motifs in plenty. He mostly composed in *rajaz* metre, but he did not fall short when composing *qaṣīd*.[5]

Ibrāhīm ibn ʿĀmir al-Nawfalī told me, quoting someone else, who said: I saw Abū Nukhaylah when he had just left the presence of al-Walīd ibn Yazīd.[6] Footmen went in front of him and he carried with him a lot of money that al-Walīd had given him, which he spread left and right as alms. When he had arrived at

1 Abū Nukhaylah al-Ḥimmānī (d. c. 147/764) was a poet of (mainly) *rajaz*, active as panegyrist of the Umayyads and the first two Abbasid caliphs, switching his allegiance without scruples to the extent of recycling a poem with a few adaptations for the new ruler al-Saffāḥ. It is said that his name derives from the fact that his mother gave birth to him under a palm tree (*nukhaylah*, "little palm tree") and his proper name (*ism*) is given as Yaʿmar; others say that Abū Nukhaylah was his *ism*. He has entries in Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 602; *Aghānī*, xx, 389–422; *GAS*, ii, 465, ix, 288; *EI2*, *Suppl.*, 31, "Abū Nukhayla" (Ch. Pellat); *EAL*, 41 (J.E. Montgomery).

2 See Thaʿlab, *Majālis*, 416; *Aghānī*, xx, 391; Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, xi, 27. In al-Mubarrad, *Kāmil*, ii, 70, Khālid's words are addressed to the poet al-Farazdaq instead of Abū Nukhaylah. On the famous orator Khālid ibn Ṣafwān (d. 135/752) see Hämeen-Anttila, *Portrait*; on this report, see 27, 181–184, with more sources and translations with commentary.

3 The following is rhyming prose (*sajʿ*).

4 Compare Q al-Baqarah 2:273: *they do not beg importunately from the people*.

5 *Qaṣīd* is the generic term for poems in metres other than *rajaz*, which is an old and relatively simple metre with verses roughly half the length of that of other metres. A *qaṣīdah* is a longer poem, often polythematic; *rajaz* was originally used for shorter, often extemporised poems but by Abū Nukhaylah's time it was also used for longer poems. It remained a favourite form for hunting poetry. On *rajaz* see e.g. *EI2*, viii, 375–379, "radjaz" (M. Ullmann & W. Heinrichs); Ullmann, *Untersuchungen*; *EAL*, 645–646 (W. Stoetzer).

6 Al-Walīd ibn Yazīd, bad caliph and good poet ("one of the most original poets in Arabic literary history" according to Renate Jacobi, *EI2*, xi, 128–129, "al-Walīd [II] as a poet"), reigned briefly 125–126/743–744 before he was killed.

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his house he gave one hundred dinars to the footmen that had marched before him. Al-Walīd was fond of him; he was the one who taught him to compose poetry.[7]

Of Abū Nukhaylah's poetry, one admires the poem in which he boasts of his tribe, the Banū Tamīm:[8] [64]

> We have beaten al-Azd in Iraq
> And the tribe of Rabīʿah, the renegades,
> With blows that straighten proudly contorted necks,
> Not out of greed or wishing gain,
> But for what remains of our noble roots.

It is a long poem in which he mentions the war of the tribes of Azd and Tamīm in Basra. In another *rajaz* poem that is admired as being original[9] he says,[10]

> When I saw that religion is made into a lie,
> And that the Dome no longer holds together,[11]
> Shaking on all sides, ravished,
> Then I went to its gate—the compact sand flew up,[12]
> Where dark and ash-coloured horse went about,
> Like the night—except that they moved.

These verses are famous and therefore we quote only these. Another poem of his that is admired is a panegyric on Maslamah ibn ʿAbd al-Malik. It is a fine poem containing beautiful motifs, and in it he says:[13]

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7 If this report is true, it is remarkable that the long entry on Abū Nukhaylah in *Aghānī* does not mention al-Walīd.

8 See al-Mubarrad, *Kāmil*, i, 190 (with two more verses), attributed to "a *rajaz* poet of the Banū Tamīm, on the battle of al-Jufrah". On this battle, near Basra, see *Naqāʾiḍ*, 749–750, 1089–1092.

9 I follow Eghbal and Farrāj in reading *yustaṭrafu*, instead of *yustaẓrafu* ("found witty") as in the MS, which is also possible (the verbs are often confused in manuscripts).

10 Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥayawān*, iii, 126; al-ʿAskarī, *Dīwān al-maʿānī*, ii, 116; idem, *Ṣināʿatayn*, 425 (vss. 5–6, anonymously).

11 Both Kufa and Basra are called "the Dome of Islam" (*Qubbat al-Islām*); see van Gelder, "Kufa *vs* Basra", 344, 358, 361.

12 I read *fa-ṭāra*, with *Ḥayawān*, instead of *fa-sāra* in M adopted by Farrāj; the MS has *b.s.y.l.*

13 It is in *ṭawīl* metre, not *rajaz*. See al-Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥayawān*, ii, 100 (vss. 2, 4); Ibn Qutaybah, *ʿUyūn*, iii, 165 (vss. 2, 4); al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, iv, 108 (vss. 1–2, 4); al-Qālī, *Amālī*, i, 30 (vss. 1–4); *Aghānī*, xx, 380 (vss. 2, 4), 392 (vss. 1–4), 400 (vs. 1); al-Āmidī, *Muʾtalif*, 193 (vss. 1–2, 4).

Maslamah, son of caliphs,
knight of battle, mountain on earth!
I thank you—thanking is a rope to piety,
but it is not performed by everyone you favoured with a gift.
When I came to you as a visitor, you cast
over me a wide tent of ample hight and breadth,[14]
And you alerted people to my renown, which was
not obscure—but some renown is better than some.

[65] Among his *rajaz* that is widely known and famous is his poem on Abū l-ʿAbbās al-Saffāḥ, congratulating him on becoming caliph:[15]

Now the pulpit is on stable ground
And the world is good, a proper home,
Since the Caliph is settled in al-Anbār.

One of his famous popular *rajaz* poems, known to many, is the following:[16]

O ʿAmr! Many camels have come to drink, obscuring the waterhole,[17]
On the day that sheep and camels came together
And ropes and pulleys were busily drawing water.
Now prove to us your valour, the valour we know!
For you are a brother we cannot do without,
A companion of close friends, a man with noble traits,
Bred in opulence, honoured by his father,
One who rose, leaping into battle, stout-hearted,
His wrist as if an iron skewer.

Maslamah (d. 121/738), son of the caliph ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Marwān, was a celebrated general, most famous for his siege of Constantinople in 98–99/716–718.

14 Instead of *wa-alqayta … riwāqan madīdan sāmiqa l-ṭūli wa-l-ʿarḍi*, *Aghānī* and *Amālī* have *wa-alqayta … ʿalayya liḥāfan sābigha l-ṭūli wa-l-ʿarḍī* ("You cast on me a robe of ample length and breadth"); both images denote protection.

15 Not found elsewhere. For al-Anbār, see above, p. 82 note 6.

16 Thaʿlab, *Majālis*, 194–195 attributes a poem containing vss. 1–6, 8, 10, 12 (with one more verse) to Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥadhlamī, also known as Abū Muḥammad al-Faqʿasī, a poet of the Umayyad period, see Ullmann, *Untersuchungen*, 40 and GAS, ii, 373. Hämeen-Anttila, *Minor Raǧaz Collections*, 238–239 quotes 14 verses (see 67–68 for sources and variants), in the section on Abū Muḥammad al-Faqʿasī.

17 The identity of ʿAmr (or Saʿd, as in Thaʿlab, *Majālis*) is unknown.

He does not belch when food gives him indigestion,[18]
And fever never weakens him at night.
His foot can crush the brick casing of a well.
And ah, the distance between his skull and his ankle!

Abū Nukhaylah describes a hunt of ten ostriches in the following:[19] {23} [66]

I describe a foal with sleek back,[20]
Reddish, a full-blooded horse with compact body,
Going out in the morning, high-necked in the bridle, proudly,
[Pursuing][21] ten ostriches that are chased,
Knock-kneed,[22] huge.
It wheeled to one side, they wheeled with it, fleeing.
It was all "There it is!" and "Get it!"
Until at last they, jostling, were assembled
By the wide-stepped steed and betrayed by their leg-muscles,
The sides of a tall she-ostrich had failed her[23]
And she was felled, the last of the she-ostriches,
Without an "Allahu akbar" or salat,
As if she were the last one of the night-travellers.

He composed many famous hunting poems in *rajaz* metre, such as the poem with rhyme letter L in which he says,[24]

18 A parallel of this remarkable motif is a very similar verse by another *rajaz* poet, al-ʿUmānī, a contemporary of Abū Nukhaylah, see al-Tawḥīdī, *Imtāʿ*, iii, 56: *lam yatajashshaʾ min ṭaʿāmin bashamā*. The next verse is also nearly identical in both poems. Al-ʿUmānī has an entry below (§18).

19 The verses have not been found elsewhere.

20 As Farrāj notes, there are metrical and lexical problems in this verse. The metre requires reading *sabiṭ*, whereas the normal form is *sabṭ* ("smooth, lank; well-built"), and *qarāt* is an unusual form of *qarā* ("back"). Several of Farrāj's emendations in this poem with its sometimes corrupt text have been followed.

21 Something appears to be missing.

22 *Ṣukk al-ʿarāqīb*; said of ostriches, because (Lane, *Lexicon*, ṣ.ĸ.ĸ): "he is long in step, long-legged, and sometimes, or often, his *rukbatān* [two knees] … being near together, his legs strike each other".

23 Uncertain translation of a problematical verse.

24 Another poem not found elsewhere and with textual difficulties to the extent that Farrāj refrains from suggestions. I have not attempted to translate vs. 2 (*yalḥanu min dhī mayʿatin muʿājilī*).

It wheeled to one side, on the flat ground with loose sand,
...
[67] Until it approached the blazing heat of dust columns,
Near a speedy plumaged one, its ostrich feathers drooping,
The two moved to and fro under the wing of a mountain slope(?).[25]
[I struck it] with a blow [from a sword] new from the burnisher(?),[26]
Variegated of its two ... and leg-muscles,
So that it is bound like the rope of a rope-twister(?).[27]

Abū Nukhaylah composed many wonderful poems on hunting and other subjects. What we have quoted should serve as an indication of the rest. His poems are extant and many; those who want them will not fail to find them.

25 *tahṭa janāḥi l-mā'ilī*; cf. perhaps *janāḥ mā'il min al-jabal* (al-Baghdādī, *Khizānat al-adab*, v, 177).

26 Some words added by me as something seems to be missing; translation uncertain.

27 I am unable to make much sense of the last two verses, which read as *manqūshati l-riqqayni* (*?*) *wa-l-khaṣāyilī* | *fa-hwa maqīṭun ka-miqāṭi l-fāyilī*. Following Eghbal's suggestion I have read the last word as *fātilī*, which seems to fit better with *miqāṭ*. Prof. Abeer al-Abbasi (Jeddah) suggests reading *manqūshat al-raqīn*, "adorned (as if) with henna" (personal communication), but the form *raqīn* in this sense has not been found elsewhere.

8 Ḥammād ʿAjrad[1]

Abū l-ʿAbbās al-Mubarrad said: Abū Yaʿqūb al-Bāhilī said:[2] Ḥammād ʿAjrad lampooned Muḥammad ibn Sulaymān al-Hāshimī[3] with his poem in which he says:

He has the body of a flea, the intelligence of a freed slave,
And the lewdness of a cat that yowls at night.

Muḥammad ibn Sulaymān proclaimed that Ḥammād's blood could by shed with impunity, so Ḥammād realised that he could not stay in Basra. He went to the grave of Muḥammad's father Sulaymān ibn ʿAlī ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-ʿAbbās,[4] seeking refuge there. He composed on this the following verses:[5]

Not having found among all people one to protect me,
I sought protection from graves and stones.
I have made Abū Ayyūb's grave my protector
against the events Fate may bring.
He who dwells in the protection of that grave
is surely entitled to be safe from perdition and mishap.

1 Ḥammād ʿAjrad (d. between 155/772 and 168/784), a poet especially noted for his lampoons, was a *mawlā* from Kufa. He is said to have been a boon companion of al-Walīd ibn Yazīd and later became associated with al-Manṣūr. He is described a libertine and he was accused of heresy, suspected of Manichaeism (*zandaqah*). His nickname (ʿAjrad, "stripped") distinguishes him from two contemporaries and friends called Ḥammād (see the following entry, § 8a, where he returns); allegedly it was given to him after someone saw him playing naked with some boys on a cold day (*Aghānī*, xiv, 323). Entries on him are in Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 779–781; *Aghānī*, xiv, 320–381; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, ix, 5; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh*, xv, 141–146; Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabā'*, ix, 249–254; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, ii, 210–214; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xiii, 142–145; GAS, ii, 469–470; EAL, 269 (G.J.H. van Gelder); EI2, iii, 135–136, "Ḥammād ʿAd̲jrad" (Ch. Pellat).

2 Abū l-ʿAbbās Muḥammad ibn Yazīd al-Mubarrad (d. 286/899 or 900), important philologist and one of Ibn al-Muʿtazz's teachers; on Abū Yaʿqūb ibn Ibrāhīm al-Bāhilī al-Jarjarā'ī, see al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, vii, 397–398.

3 Muḥammad ibn Sulaymān (d. 171/787–788), a member of the Abbasid family, governor of Basra. Angry because Ḥammād had made an amorous poem on Zaynab, the daughter of Muḥammad's father Sulaymān ibn ʿAlī, he became the butt of several lampoons by the poet, who had to flee from him but, according to a report, was assassinated at his orders. See *Aghānī*, xiv, 336, 376–380. The following verse is in *Aghānī*, xiv, 379.

4 Abū Ayyūb Sulayman ibn ʿAlī had died in 142/759.

5 See *Aghānī*, xiv, 377–381 and 379 (12 + 5 vss. with the same metre and rhyme, containing the verses of the fragment quoted here).

Al-Mahdī the poet told me:[6] They said to Bashshār, the blind one, "What is the worst thing that Ḥammād ʿAjrad lampooned you with?" He answered, "It is his
[68] verse 'You uglier than a monkey, | when the monkey is blind!'" ‖ It is also said that none of his lampoons on him hurt him as much as the following two verses:

If his skin were daubed with ambergris
his skin would make the ambergris stink.
Or, if it were daubed with fragrant musk
the musk would turn into shit.

Of Ḥammād's poetry one admires the poem in which he says:[7]

{24} There's many a friend you never disavowed
as long as you were prosperous in this world,
But who was pretending affection for you,
meeting you with "Welcome!" and a cheerful face,
Lauding loyalty and loyal folk, vigorously reviling
betrayal and traitors.
But when Fate turns against you (Fate is fickle),
he too, with Fate, turns against you.
Therefore reject and neglect[8] the friendship of those
who hate a hard-up man and love a rich one,
And stick to those who are the same in both circumstances,
whether you are in penury or in affluence.
I have experience—and someone with experience
and someone without it are not on the same level—
And I found suspect those I had loved,
behaving alongside Fate's behaviour,
Except some few who stayed true
and forever grateful.

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6 Identity unknown. For the following verses, see above, p. 43.

7 See Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 780, with vss. 1–6 followed by another verse not quoted here; the same idem, *ʿUyūn*, iii, 80, *Aghānī*, xiv, 359 (where the poem is said to be about ʿĪsā ibn ʿUmar ibn Yazīd, who had been his friend); al-Qālī, *Amālī*, ii, 304–305 (anonymously). The verses are also, presumably incorrectly, in al-Buḥturī's *Dīwān*, 1102, and they are ascribed to "a man of the tribe of Tamīm" in al-Tawḥīdī, *Ṣadāqah*, 73. In Ibn Abī l-Dunyā, *Ashrāf*, 230, they are quoted as recited by (and perhaps composed by) Ṣāliḥ ibn Sulaymān al-Tamīmī.

8 Instead of *bi-ihmālin* all other sources have *bi-ijmālin*, "totally".

Admired among the choice poetry of Ḥammād is also the following:[9]

Are you not certain of my love for you?
Know that I am certain of your love for me.[10]
I swear by Him who called to His servant from the Mount[11]
and who honoured Jesus, son of Mary with the Gospel,[12]
And who singled out Muḥammad to receive the verses of the Qur'an,
the Prophet of Right Guidance, may He bless and preserve him:
You have obtained an impregnable place in my heart,
in which I find I pour my blood for you!
And this I deem a gain; I do not deem what other people [69]
see as profitable gain to be a true gain.
I shall drink the two cups you have poured for me,
even, by God! if they be of colocynth and wormwood.[13]
And I shall put my hand, right after your hand, to any mishap
that afflicts you, even if I have to insert it into the hole of a speckled
snake.

9 Not found elsewhere, except for vss. 6–7, quoted anonymously in al-Tawḥīdī, *Baṣā'ir*, viii, 189.

10 Both editors find this verse problematical (Farrāj: *mutahālik ghayra wāḍiḥ*, al-Ṭabbā': *fī hādhā l-bayt ghumūḍ*), perhaps on account of the second hemistich, which I read as (*innanī*) | *bi-wuddika minnī wāthiqun liya* [which seems better than *biya*] *fa-ʿlamā*. I take the imperative not as a dual but as a pausal form of the energetic form of the imperative, *fa-ʿlaman*.

11 See Q Maryam 19:52: *We* [*God*] *called to him* [*Mūsā/Moses*] *from the right side of the Mount*, and Q al-Shuʿarā' 26:10: *When your Lord called out to Moses/Mūsā*.

12 The Gospel (*al-Injīl*) is mentioned several times in the Qur'an; see e.g. Q al-Ḥadīd 57:27: *We gave him* [*ʿĪsā/Jesus*] *the Gospel*.

13 *Ṣāb and ʿalqam*; two bitter-tasting plants. Both are translated as "colocynth" in some dictionaries. Online search seems to suggest that *ṣāb* is in fact *Euphorbia fractiflexa*.

8a The Ḥammāds[1]

Ḥammād ʿAjrad, Ḥammād ibn al-Zibriqān, and Ḥammād al-Rāwiyah were contemporaries. Each was a proficient poet and an eminent orator. Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Thaqafī told me: Ibrāhīm ibn ʿUmar al-Kūfī told me: Ḥammād ʿAjrad was a *mawlā* of the Banū Suwāʾah ibn ʿĀmir ibn Ṣaʿṣaʿah. He was a schoolteacher and then became famous for his poetry and he composed panegyrics on rulers. There[2] were three people in Kufa, called "the Ḥammāds": Ḥammād ʿAjrad, Ḥammād ibn al-Zibriqān, and Ḥammād al-Rāwiyah. They used to drink wine together, reciting poetry to each other and being great chums together. It was as if they were one soul. They were all suspected of being heretics. Whenever people saw one of them they would say, "A heretic! Kill him!"[3]

Ḥammād ibn al-Zibriqān had criticised Ḥammād al-Rāwiyah about something. He lampooned him, mentioning his wine-drinking:[4]

> What a fine man, if only he knew his own status
> and observed the ritual prayer, that Ḥammād!

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1 Exceptionally in this book, this section is about three poets, who were not only namesakes but were also friends. One of them is Ḥammād ʿAjrad, who returns here with Ḥammād ibn al-Zibriqān and Ḥammād al-Rāwiyah. Ibn al-Zibriqān is the least prominent of the three and he is rarely mentioned except as a grammarian (Ibn Sallām, *Ṭabaqāt*, 14; Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 767; al-Qifṭī, *Inbāh*, i, 365–367) or a heretic, *zindīq* (see e.g. al-Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥayawān*, iv, 447). Ḥammād al-Rāwiyah (d. 155/772 or the next year) is important especially as a great transmitter (*rāwiyah*) of early poetry, who, in Pellat's words, "did not care too much about authorship and authenticity"; he was accused of forgeries (see e.g. Ibn Sallām, *Ṭabaqāt*, 40–41). He was of Persian descent; his father's name is given variously as Sābūr, Maysarah, or Abū Laylā. Entries on him are in *Aghānī*, vi, 69–95; al-Marzubānī, *Nūr al-qabas*, 269–271; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh*, xv, 150–157; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, ii, 206–210; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xiii, 137–142; *EI2*, iii 135–136, "Ḥammād al-Rāwiya" (Ch. Pellat); *EAL*, "Ḥammād al-Rāwiya" (P.F. Kennedy); *GAS*, xvi, 174. No poetry by Ḥammād al-Rāwiyah is quoted in this section, however, and only one short piece by Ibn al-Zibriqān (on Ḥammād ʿAjrad). Since all other poetry quoted is by Ḥammād ʿAjrad, this section is in effect a continuation of the preceding one and I have numbered it § 8a.

2 See also Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 779, *Aghānī*, vi, 74.

3 None of the three were killed on account of their alleged belief.

4 Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥayawān*, iv, 445; Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 779; Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, vi, 339 (anonymously); *Aghānī*, vi, 85–86 (5 verses, attributing them to Abū l-Ghūl, on whom see below, § 26); al-Marzubānī, *Nūr al-qabas*, 271 (attributed to "a certain poet", or to Abū l-Ghūl al-Nahshalī, which is apparently an error for Abū l-Ghūl al-Ṭuhawī); Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh*, xv, 145 (anonymously); Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, ii, 211 (vss. 1, 3, attributing them to Bashshār ibn Burd); al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xiii, 141–142 (attributing the verses to Abū l-Ghūl).

Wine jugs have made his big lips hang loose and his nose
is like an adze sharpened by a blacksmith.
His face has turned white from drinking wine
but his whiteness will turn black at the Day of Reckoning![5]

Ḥammād ʿAjrad composed the following:[6]

A noble man conceals his penury from you,
so that you think him rich though he is strained.
A miser always seeks excuses, though wealthy: [70]
bleary eyes in black faces.[7]
If you are unwilling to give little and unable to give {25}
plenty, generosity does not become evident.
Let beneficence sprout, which gives hope of gifts:
fruits cannot be hoped for if the wood does not sprout leaves.
Spread gifts, let their slightness not stop you:
everything that bars poverty is praiseworthy.

He also composed these neat and often-quoted verses:[8]

Ḥurayth Abū l-Faḍl is an expert
who knows how to restore dyspeptic stomachs.
Afraid of giving his guests indigestion,
he has accustomed them to be served only one course.

5 See Q Āl-ʿImrān 3:106, on the Day of Judgement: *The day when some faces turn white and when some faces turn black*.

6 Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 779–780; idem, *ʿUyūn*, iii, 178; Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, i, 236, vi, 194; *Aghānī*, iii, 190 (preceded by another verse and attributed to Bashshār ibn Burd, on al-ʿAbbās ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAbbās); Bashshār, *Dīwān*, iii, 121–122. The verses are also attributed to Kulthūm ibn ʿAmr al-ʿAttābī, see al-Qālī, *Amālī*, ii, 135, al-ʿAskarī, *Dīwān al-maʿānī*, i, 154–155; see also Abū ʿUbayd al-Bakrī, *Tanbīh*, 106–107.

7 *Zurq* may mean "blue", but, said of eyes, it may also be "greenish, suffering from cataract". The eyes of sinners are said to be *zurq* (white, or blind, with terror) on the Last Day (Q Ṭāhā 20:120), just as their faces will be black (see above, note 5). The miser's excuses are personified as misshapen sinners.

8 Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān*, iii, 241; Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 780; idem, *ʿUyūn*, iii, 244; *Aghānī*, xiv, 339 (where the addressee, Ḥurayth ibn Abī l-Ṣalt al-Ḥanafī, is said to have been a friend of Ḥammād's).

Choice verses by him are the following:[9]

I am not angry, but I know
what is the matter with you, my friend.
You shunned me because I abandoned wine?[10]
My love of you was not based on wine.
Before, you were always concerned
by all my comings and goings.
In my eyes you are the one
who corrupted me after I had been virtuous.
You are a human being. If you reproach someone,
now here is some plain speaking from me for you!

A favourite is also Ḥammād's poem in which he reproaches Abū Yazīd and Yaḥyā:[11]

Abū Yazīd and Yaḥyā have shunned me;
upon my life, I was not afraid of their shunning me!
In the past they always kept close to me, but it was
no affection that used to keep them close to me.
It was merely that I enjoyed the Ruler's protection:
their closeness was for the Ruler's sake.
Then, when Time changed my Ruler's fortune,
they changed[12] with the cheating change of Time.

He composed a panegyric on Muḥammad, the son of Abū l-ʿAbbās al-Saffāḥ, when he was al-Manṣūr's governor of Basra:[13]

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9 *Aghānī*, xiv, 335, where it is said that the verses were addressed to one of his drinking companions, who deserted him when the wine was depleted.

10 *Aghānī* has "I had no more wine" (*faqadtu l-rāḥa*).

11 The verses have not been found elsewhere and the two persons mentioned have not been identified.

12 The plural form (*ḥālū*) may be an error for the expected dual (*ḥālā*). The "Ruler" (*sulṭān*) may be the Umayyad caliph al-Walīd ibn Yazīd (see above, p. 94 note 6), who was killed in 126/744.

13 Al-Balādhurī, *Jumal*, iv, 241; al-Ṣūlī, *Awrāq*, iii (*Ashʿār awlād al-khulafāʾ*), 8; Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 781 (vss. 1, 3); Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, i, 316 (vs. 1, 3, said to be to al-Manṣūr); *Aghānī*, xiv, 375; al-Tawḥīdī, *Baṣāʾir*, v, 41; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh Madīnat Dimashq*, xv, 142 (said to be addressed to Abū l-ʿAbbās al-Ṭūsī); Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, x, 253 (the same). On Muḥammad, the son of al-Saffāḥ, see al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, iii, 314. He died in 149/766–767.

I call upon you after Abū l-ʿAbbās passed away,
O most noble of people, of roots and branches!
You are the noblest of all who walk on foot [71]
and the freshest of twigs in times of drought.
If ever a staff exuded its sap on people,
your staff would exude to us musk and ben oil![14]

It is from a long poem. Admired among Ḥammād's poetry is also the poem with which he lampoons some member of the Umayyad family:[15]

Once I visited a man at his home
who was modest and virtuous.
He hates to give his guests indigestion:
one has to be wary of indigestion!
And he is eager that at his place one gets a wage
for fasting. There is a wage to those who fast.[16]

Muḥammad ibn ʿĀmir al-Ḥanafī told me: al-Yaḥṣubī told me:[17] One day Ḥammād ʿAjrad was drinking with Abū Dulāmah. Both got drunk with the wine and people came to arrest them. Abū Dulāmah fled, but Ḥammād was apprehended. He was taken to al-Mahdī, who said, "Smell his breath!" They did, and they

14 The play on roots, branches, twigs, and staff/wood (*ʿūd*) refers to the occasion of the poem, as told by al-Ṣūlī, *Awrāq*, and *Aghānī*: the governor was bending his *ʿamūd* (which I take to be his staff) and throwing it to his sister Rayṭah, who returned it back to him. Presumably it was a form of exercise, or he was merely showing off (he is called "a strong man" in the anecdote). Ben oil (*bān*), from the moringa tree, is used in perfumes and for various other purposes.

15 Al-Khalīl, *ʿAyn*, iv, 302 (*KhYR*; anonymously); Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 780–781; idem, *ʿUyūn*, iii, 264; Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, vi, 191 (anonymously); *Aghānī*, xiv, 351. In *ʿUyūn* and *Aghānī* the addressee is named as Muḥammad ibn Ṭalḥah, perhaps to be identified as Muḥammad ibn Ṭalḥah ibn Muṣarrif, a *muḥaddith* (transmitter of Hadith) from Kufa who died 167/783–784, but who was not a member of the Umayyad family.

16 See for instance Q al-Aḥzāb 33:35: … *the men and women who fast* (…), *for them God has prepared forgiveness and great wage*.

17 Somewhat different versions of the following story are about Abū Dulāmah, who also composed the quoted verses, without mention of Ḥammād. See *Aghānī*, x, 251–252; Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, i, 261–262; al-Tawḥīdī, *Baṣāʾir*, ix, 28–29; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, ix, 519–520 and several later sources. In *Aghānī*, *Baṣāʾir*, and al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh* the caliph is al-Manṣūr instead of al-Mahdī. Closer to Ibn al-Muʿtazz's version is al-Ḥuṣrī, *Jamʿ*, 113–114.

found that he smelled of wine. The Caliph wanted to make fun of him. "You enemy of God!" he said, "You drink wine and get drunk? I'll have you punished with the fixed punishment,[18] and no one will be able to blame me for doing right to God! Keep him detained until he is sober!" Ḥammād was taken to a room where chickens were kept, after they had cuffed his ears and torn his clothes. Then he wrote to al-Mahdī,

Commander of the Believers (may I be made your ransom!),[19]
  why have you detained me and torn my hood?
{26} I was led to prison guiltless,
  as if I were some tax collector!
And had I been detained with those, my pain would have been slight,
  but I have been detained with chickens!
Is it because of a red wine redolent of musk,
  that glitters in the cup when mixed with water?
[72] A vintage wine, like a cock's eye when unmixed,
  casting rays like a burning lamp,
Cooked with God's fire until it had become
  ripe, a trickling liquid …
My conjectures are telling me
  that I shall not escape your punishment.
Yet, though I meet with evil, I shall, even after it,
  wish you all good things!

The Caliph had him brought out and gave him a gift. When Ḥammād had left, al-Rabīʿ[20] said to the Caliph, "Did you understand his verse 'Cooked with God's fire until it had become | ripe, a trickling liquid'?" The Caliph replied, "Sure! What did he mean by it?" "He meant the sun." "Bring him back", said the Caliph. They brought him back and al-Mahdī asked, "What did you mean with your verse 'Cooked by God's fire …' Did you mean the sun?" Ḥammād replied, "No,

18 In the Sharia the fixed punishment (*ḥadd*) for drinking wine is eighty lashes.

19 A very common formula expression of devotion and respect to someone. I have on occasion translated it, less foreignisingly, as "my dear fellow" or something similar.

20 Al-Rabīʿ ibn Yūnus (d. 169/785–786 or a year later), a man born as a slave in Medina, who served the first four Abbasid caliphs, becoming al-Manṣūr's chamberlain and then vizier. See *EI2*, iii, 350–351, "al-Rabīʿ b. Yūnus" (A.S. Atiya).

rather *God's Fire blazing, over hearts rising, over* al-Rabīʿ *closing*!"[21] The Caliph laughed and gave orders for him to be released.

Ḥammād's poems are very numerous; he is one of the famous poets.[22]

21 Quoting and adapting Q al-Humazah 104:6–8, which has *over them closing*.

22 Eghbal, in his Notes et variantes (9–10) quotes a passage from *Aghānī* (xiv, 333–334) said to have been "copied from the book of ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Muʿtazz" but not found in the present text. It contains a satire by Ḥammād ʿAjrad on the famous jurist Abū Ḥanīfah (d. 150/767); Eghbal surmises that a copyist omitted it out of respect for Abū Ḥanīfah. Farrāj gives the text in an Appendix (463–464). See also al-Maʿarrī, *Ghufrān*, ii, 134–135; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh*, xv, 144; Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, x, 250–251; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, ii, 211–212.

> Abū Ḥanīfah, the jurist, was a friend of Ḥammād ʿAjrad. Then Abū Ḥanīfah became pious and studied jurisprudence, becoming adept in this. He rejected Ḥammād's company and spoke disparagingly of him. Ḥammād kept being friendly to him, not saying anything against him, whereas Abū Ḥanīfah kept mentioning him. Then Ḥammād wrote to him these verses:
>
> > If, to make your piety complete, | you must scold and detract from me,
> > Or if it is only thus you hope | to be saved from retaliation,
> > Get yourself in a state about me, if you must, | telling people near and far!
> > So often have you called me honest | while I persisted in sinning,
> > The days you would hand me and take from me | what is contained in the lead pitchers!
>
> After that Abū Ḥanīfah stopped mentioning him, fearing his tongue.

9 Abū l-Shīṣ[1]

He is Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Razīn al-Khuzāʿī, the paternal cousing of Diʿbil.[2] Aḥmad ibn Ibrāhīm said: Abū ʿAṣīdah said to me:[3] Muslim ibn al-Walīd "Slain-by-the-Fair", Abū Nuwās, Abū l-Shīṣ, and Diʿbil came together for a drinking session. They said, "Each one of us should recite the best bit that he composed!" To Muslim they said, "We suppose, Abū l-Walīd, you'll come up with your verses:[4]

[73] Whenever [the wine] rises to the forelocks of one of us
it makes him walk as if walking shackled in mud.
Is the good life anything but with youthful folly in the evening
and in the morning being slain by wine-cup and large eyes?"

On account of this verse he was nicknamed "Slain by the Fair", a name given to him by al-Rashīd, in a nice story that we shall tell in the entry on Muslim.[5] Then they said to Abū Nuwās, "We suppose, Abū ʿAlī,[6] you'll come up with your verses:[7]

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1 Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Razīn al-Khuzāʿī, known as Abū l-Shīṣ (d. c. 196/812 or some years later), a Shi'ite poet born in Kufa, panegyrist of Hārūn al-Rashīd and al-Amīn. See on him Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 843–848; *Aghānī*, xvi, 399–407; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, iii, 394–396; al-Nashshābī, *Mudhākarah*, 99–103; Ibn Shākir, *Fawāt*, iii, 402–403; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, iii, 302–303; Ibn Faḍl Allāh, *Masālik* (ed. al-Jubūrī), xiv, 455–459; *GAS*, ii, 532–533; *EI2*, i, 151–152; *EAL*, 46 (P.F. Kennedy); al-Najjār, *Shuʿarāʾ ʿAbbāsiyyūn mansiyyūn*, ii, 1, 193–218. Ibn al-Muʿtazz's entry is relatively long, considering that he was not reckoned a very prominent poet (*Aghānī*, xvi, 400 calls him "middling in status, not outstanding", overshadowed by his contemporaries Muslim ibn al-Walīd, Ashjaʿ al-Sulamī, and Abū Nuwās). The number of his verses quoted, 189, is topped only by Rabīʿah al-Raqqī (§ 30, with 192 verses), another "minor" poet. I have not found an explanation of his nickname, Abū l-Shīṣ, which is not his teknonym. The rare word *shīṣ* means "unfecundated dates"; Abū l-ʿAtāhiyah (see entry § 36) mocked Wālibah ibn al-Ḥubāb (see entry § 10) as "being among the Arabs | like *shīṣ* among fresh dates." On Abū l-Shīṣ's son ʿAbd Allāh, also a poet, see below, entry § 90.

2 On Diʿbil see below, § 45.

3 For the meeting of the four poets see the different accounts in *Aghānī*, xvi, 401–404 and Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, v, 374–376. Muslim ibn al-Walīd (nicknamed *Ṣarīʿ al-ghawānī*, "Slain by the Fair") and Abū Nuwās have entries below, §§ 37 and 33, respectively. In the present version, one must assume that the choices of Muslim, Abū Nuwās, and Diʿbil were correctly guessed, but in *Aghānī* this is confirmed explicitly with a repeated *ṣadaqta*, "You're right!"

4 Muslim ibn al-Walīd, *Dīwān*, 42, 43 (vss. 30 and 35 of a poem on women and wine).

5 See the entry on him, below (§ 37, pp. 336–337).

6 Abū ʿAlī is his teknonym, Abū Nuwās his nickname; see also below, § 33.

7 Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān*, iii, 107. The translation is taken from my anthology, *Classical Arabic Literature*, 40, with a few changes.

Don't cry for Laylā, don't rave about Hind!
But drink among roses a rose-red wine,
A draught that descends from the drinker's hand,
bestowing its redness on eyes and cheeks.
The glass is a ruby, the wine is a pearl,
served by the hand of a slim-figured girl,[8]
Who serves you a wine from her eye, and wine
from her hand—doubly drunk, for sure, will you be.
Thus I am drunk twice, my friends only once:
a special favour, for me alone!"

Then they said to Diʿbil, "You'll probably come up with:[9]

Don't find it strange in a man, Salmā,
that when grey hairs laugh on his head he weeps!"

In the same poem one finds:

Don't impose the wrong I suffer on anyone!
My heart and my eyes share my blood.[10]

Then they said to Abū l-Shīṣ, "You'll probably come up with:[11] {27}

Untie the rope of my mount, not because of dislike,
and go! For I too, Umaymah, am going.
There are two men women do not long for:
a man with grey hair and one who is a wreck."

Abū l-Shīṣ said, "No, I'll recite to you some verses I composed during the last few days." They said, "Let's hear them!" And he recited:[12]

---

8 I have followed the *Dīwān*, reading *jāriyatin*, instead of *luʾluʾatin*, "of a pearl".

9 Diʿbil, *Dīwān*, 249, in a short poem on grey hair, quoting vss. 2 and 8. The former is often quoted, especially to illustrate *muṭābaqah* or *ṭibāq* (antithesis), see e.g. Qudāmah, *Naqd al-shiʿr*, 80 (who calls it *mukāfaʾah*), Yamūt ibn al-Muzarraʿ, *Amālī*, 48; al-ʿAskarī, *Ṣināʿatayn*, 317 (anonymously). Ibn Ṭabāṭabā, *ʿIyār*, 124, claims that Diʿbil took the motif from a verse by al-Ḥusayn ibn Muṭayr ("… the earth laughs from the weeping of the sky"). See also a verse by al-ʿAkawwak quoted below, p. 253.

10 Conventionally, in poetry tears of blood are regularly shed.

11 Abū l-Shīṣ, *Dīwān*, 76 (vss. 8 and 5 of the poem quoted below).

12 Abū l-Shīṣ, *Dīwān*, 101–102; Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 843; Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, v, 374–355; al-

[74] Love brought me to a halt with you: I cannot
move either back or forward.
I relish being blamed for loving you, for I love
hearing your name: let blamers blame me!
You have abased me, so I did my best to abase myself:
those who are base in your eyes are not among the honoured.
You resemble my enemies, so I came to love them,
since I got from you what I got from them.

"Bravo!" said Abū Nuwās, "A pretty motif! But you must know that I shall take it from you, and that my verse will be popular and yours won't." He did indeed take it and included it in his verse on al-Khaṣīb:[13]

Generosity does not go further than him, nor does it stop short
before him: it goes wherever he goes.

And the verse by Abū Nuwās became well-known, whereas Abū l-Shīṣ's verse fell short of it.

Abū Mālik ʿUbayd Allāh ibn Muḥammad said: Ibn al-Aʿmash said: [When Abū l-Shīṣ was staying with ʿUqbah ibn Jaʿfar ibn al-Ashʿath al-Khuzāʿī,][14] who was a very generous patron, because the poet devoted almost all his panegyric poetry to him and because they were on familiar terms. ʿUqbah ibn al-Ashʿath had a servant[15] whom he loved very much. One evening Abū l-Shīṣ was drinking with ʿUqbah. Having got drunk, he went to sleep. In the course of the night he crept up on the servant,[16] who stabbed him with a knife, fatally wounding him. "Damn you!" exclaimed Abū l-Shīṣ, "You've killed me! But now that you

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Qālī, *Amālī*, i, 218; *Aghānī*, xvi, 402 (where they are said to have served as the lyrics for two songs composed by the famous singing-girl, poet, and courtesan ʿArīb, on whom see below, § 131); al-ʿAskarī, *Ṣināʿatayn*, 135. In *Aghānī*, xx, 225 the four verses are attributed to ʿAlī ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Jaʿfar.

13 Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān*, i, 247, in a panegyric poem on al-Khaṣīb ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd, governor of Egypt, composed 190/805 or the year after. The prediction was correct; see Wagner, *Abū Nuwās*, 79 for references to many sources.

14 The parenthesis has been added from *Aghānī*, xvi, 407, where the same story is told. ʿUqbah ibn Jaʿfar, emir of al-Raqqah, was Abū l-Shīṣ's main patron (*Aghānī*, xvi, 400). They shared a tribal affiliation to Khuzāʿah.

15 The word *khādim* is often used for a eunuch, which may be the case here.

16 *Dabīb*, literally "creeping", is often used for sexually assaulting or raping a sleeping male, a motif that is uncomfortably common in literary texts. See e.g. al-Rāghib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ii, 153, al-Tīfāshī, *Nuzhat al-albāb*, 207–220.

have done the deed, do not expose me or yourself to shame!" "What must I do?" asked the servant. "Get a sword-sheath,[17] break it and put it under me so that I die lying on it, and people will say, 'He was drunk, he fell on it, and died.'" The servant did so and Abū l-Shīṣ died very soon after. A few days later, the servant told ʿUqbah what had happened.[18] ʿUqbah forthwith killed the man.

Abū l-Shīṣ was one of the poets of al-Rashīd, on whom he composed many panegyric poems. ‖ When al-Rashīd died, he elegised him and praised al-Amīn, [75]
as in the following:[19]

Moving stars[20] brought good fortune and disaster;
We are desolate and cheerful.
The eyes weep, the mouth laughs:
we are at a funeral and a wedding feast
Newly reigning al-Amīn makes us laugh,
the death of the Caliph, yesterday, makes us weep.
Two full moons: one in al-Khuld Palace in Baghdad,[21]
and another in Ṭūs in a grave.

Among his choice poetry is the following:[22]

Time has left scars on his face
and cast whiteness over the blackness of his locks.

---

17 Instead of *qirāb*, *Aghānī* has *dastījah*, "drinking glass", which is altogether more likely.

18 *Aghānī* adds that the servant was drunk at the time.

19 Hārūn al-Rashīd died 193/809 in Ṭūs while on campaign in Persia; he was succeeded by his son al-Amīn, who was killed in 198/813 after a civil war with his half-brother al-Maʾmūn. The verses are in Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 843; Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, iii, 297; Ibn Ṭabāṭabā, *ʿIyār*, 129–130. They have been misattributed to Abū Nuwās in some sources, including al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, iii, 763, and to Abū l-ʿAtāhiyah in Ibn Abī ʿAwn, *Tashbīhāt*, 373 (vss. 2–3) and al-Zawzanī, *Ḥamāsat al-ẓurafāʾ*, i, 106; see Wagner, *Abū Nuwās in der Nebenüberlieferung*, 131. Ibn Ṭabāṭabā remarks that Abū l-Shīṣ took the motif of combining sorrow and joy in one verse from Abū Dulāmah's poem quoted above, p. 89.

20 As the astrological terms *saʿd* and *naḥs* show, *jawārⁱⁿ* are here "moving stars", or rather the planets, as in Q al-Takwīr 81:1, and not "mädchen" (girls), as in Wagner, *Abū Nuwās*, 352–353, where these verses are translated.

21 Qaṣr al-Khuld ("Eternity Palace") was built by al-Manṣūr on the bank of the Tigris. The name alludes to Paradise, which in Q al-Furqān 25:15 is called "the Garden of Eternity" (*jannat al-khuld*). It fell into ruin after the caliphate moved to Samarra under al-Muʿtaṣim (r. 218–227/833–843) for some sixty years.

22 Abū l-Shīṣ, *Dīwān*, 75–79, a panegyric on ʿUqbah ibn Jaʿfar of 27 verses, the last of which is not in the present text but found in al-Ḥātimī, *Mūḍiḥah*, 74. In the opening verses the poet speaks of himself.

The wineglass of drinking companies has shunned him,
full-breasted women feign not seeing him,
Though often the fine features of his face
were a target for their eyes.
Grey hair has unveiled his head,
and they threw aloofness and avoidance at it.
There are two men women do not long for:
a man with grey hair and one who is a wreck.
{28} Their promises, when they make them, are worthless;
their lightning flashes falsely.[23]
Do not, woman, condemn my aloofness and avoiding!
A poor man cannot be happy with his time.
Untie the rope of my mount, not because of dislike,
and go! For I too, Umaymah, am going.
My robe of youth has been replaced
by a shabby wrap: a bad substitute!
Those days when the horses of youth were restive,
disobeying the reins of their trainers!
The faces of many mounts were turned to you[24]
by the blows of Fate that bring a man down.
They fastened the wooden saddles on their mounts,
each of them impetuous, pebble-crushing,
Swiftly taking a man along his road, at times
striking the surface of the earth with gravel.
[76] They crossed, on their way to you, the extent[25] of deserts
and wastelands smooth-backed and wide.
The fast pace has eaten their flesh, of mounts and men:
they have reached you as wrecks riding wrecks.
They come to you outraged by Time,
but return from you pleased with it.
Safety from Time and its vagaries, ʿUqbah, lies
on the two shores of your swelling stream,[26]

---

23 The image is from Bedouin poetry: lightning that brings no rain is "lying".

24 Here the poet addresses his patron ʿUqbah (called Abū Muḥammad in vs. 22), described as refuge of those struck by misfortune.

25 The text has *riyāḍ*, "meadows", but the translation follows the reading of Ibn al-Shajarī, *Ḥamāsah*, 700: *niyāṭ*, which as Farrāj says in his note suits the context better.

26 A generous patron is very often compared to a *baḥr*, normally translated as "sea", but it also means "large river", which suits the context better here. ʿUqbah resided in al-Raqqah, which lies on the Euphrates.

A stream at whose gain those seeking boons take refuge,
full of channels, replete with cisterns,
One who is steady in his place when he makes his enemy twist and turn,
not afraid of slipping or sliding,
An abundant rain, adorning meadows in early spring,
and a lion roaming in thicket and grove,
Tucking up the train of his shirt ready to face death,
his lance red with blood, plunging into deadly peril.
Abū Muḥammad, our hope, has the two hands
of a king always striving to reach for glory:
One hand overflowing with gifts for his friend
and one hand dealing lethal poison to his enemies.
Many a wing that was clipped, its feathers trimmed
by fickle Time as if with shears,
You have restored, you gave back its flight feathers,
and you reset it, O setter of broken bones!
May my soul be your ransom, O lion of a battallion
that is thrown into the midst of shattered spears.

Choice poetry is also the following by Abū l-Shīṣ:[27]

Grey hair has pulled youthfulness off his shoulders;
his dyed head has folded up those locks.
Decrepitude has spread on his cheeks [77]
white scorpions that creep on to his temples.

Admired is the following poem:[28]

Though now forbidden to befriend wine
by a whiteness that loomed in my hair,
Yet I would often ride out in the morning, the sun
wrapped in its yellow clothes,
On a short-haired slender-flanked mare,
of fiery speed,

27 Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 845; Ibn Dāwūd al-Iṣbahānī, *Zahrah*, 447 (vs. 1 and another vs.); al-ʿAskarī, *Ṣināʿatayn*, 299 (first hemistich only); Abū l-Shīṣ, *Dīwān*, 30 (3 verses).

28 Abū l-Shīṣ, *Dīwān*, 60–62; Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 845–846; al-ʿAskarī, *Dīwān al-maʿānī*, ii, 123 (vss. 13, 15–18); al-Raqīq, *Quṭb al-surūr*, 1007–1008 (vss. 1–2, 5–8, 11–12).

With a sword of cutting edge
and a hunch-backed wineskin,
And a gazelle that folds its wrap,
turning it over its waist,[29]
The most delicate thing over which
wrap-buttons were ever fastened:
An oryx cow that shoots at hearts
with a magic bow.
Her eyes mix wine for the drinking
companions with wine.
Chaste of glances and limbs,
whether sober or inebriated,
Meeting over a virgin that has not been undone[30]
by fire, no, nor by cauldron,
An old woman, for whom water has woven
a collar of little beads,
It is as if red gold were flowing
on its sides.
{29} And on many a night, while riders ride
in its dark hollows,[31]
In a land where even the mud-coloured sandgrouse
are halted by bewilderment,[32]
I held fast, despite its terrors,
to God and fortitude,
And by making the daughters of the wind run[33]
in wilderness and wasteland,
Brisk ones, treading
the backs of rocks with rocks,[34]
[78] With a fast pace that cuts the night
away from dawn's forelock.

---

29 The "gazelle" ("oryx cow" in vs. 7) is an attractive wine-pouring girl.
30 The virgin is the wine that has long been stored untouched.
31 Or possibly "waves" (*amwāj* instead of *ajwāf*), as in *Dīwān al-maʿānī* (the "waves of the night" is an old metaphor).
32 The sandgrouse (*qaṭāh*) is proverbial for its homing instinct.
33 The "daughters of the wind" are fleet-footed camels (as e.g. in Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān*, i, 312: *qad shaqaqtu l-layla ʿanhā | bi-banāti l-rīḥi shaqqā*).
34 Presumably referring to the camels' hard hooves.

A poem by Abū l-Shīṣ that "flew out in the world and was spread by caravan riders" is the following:[35]

When the night cast off the burden on its neck, was your yearning
roused
by a crow that lamented on a ben-tree branch?[36]
One with deep-black wings, cawing loudly,
crying with eyes that did not shed any tears.
The croaking of a crow means separation,
and in the ben-tree is severance unlikely to be joined again.[37]
Upon my life, if your eyes seek recourse
in tears that drip unstintingly,
Then by rights the tears of your eyes
must never dry up when they blink.[38]
Those in the tribe who yesterday were
close to you are now remote.
O good life, will you ever return
with your splendid, happy days?
Good life of us, when love bore leaves
on the green wood of its twig, nearby!
Might youth and its prime again
blacken what the two advancers[39] have whitened?

35 Abū l-Shīṣ, *Dīwān*, 105–110 (42 vss.); Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 846–847 (vss. 1–3, 7, 9–11, 14–16, 18–27, 30, 29, 31–33); idem, *ʿUyūn*, i, 149 (vss. 1–3); Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, ii, 302 (vss. 1, 3); Ibn al-Muʿtazz, *Fuṣūl al-tamāthīl*, 17 (vss. 21–22); al-Washshāʾ, *Muwashshā*, 134–135 (vss. 1–3); al-Bayhaqī, *Maḥāsin*, 332 (vss. 1–3); al-Raqīq, *Quṭb al-surūr*, 645 (vss. 14–17, 22 with two further verses).

36 A crow in poetry usually stands for the separation of friends and lovers; see *EI2*, ii, 1096–1097, "Ghurāb" (Ch. Pellat). It is sometimes, perhaps less accurately, translated as "raven" (but I have used this in a poem about a woman's hair, below, p. 385).

37 Wordplay: *ghurāb* ("crow") and *ightirāb* ("separation, migration to foreign parts"); *bān* ("ben-tree") and *bayn* ("separation, severance"). Ibn Qutaybah (*ʿUyūn*) says that Abū l-Shīṣ took this from two very similar verses by an obscure poet called al-Maʿlūṭ. They are also attributed to Sawwār ibn al-Muḍarrab in al-Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥayawān*, iii, 440–441 and to Jaḥdar ibn Mālik al-ʿUklī in al-Mubarrad, *Kāmil*, i, 208–209.

38 Perhaps instead of *taṭrifānī* (as vowelled in the editions) it should be *tuṭrafānī* ("they are hurt and made to water") or *tadhrifānī* ("they flow with tears").

39 Interpretation of *al-qādimānī* uncertain; perhaps meaning "day and night", i.e., Time. Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr* has *al-ʿāriḍānī*, which usually means "the two cheeks, or sides of the head or of the beard".

Little chance, O good life, of returning
with your twigs dangling, bending close by with fruit!
Grey hair has slashed what existed between us two,
slashed like a Yemeni cloth.
Fare you well! On so many an unruly night,
nights of throwing off all restraint,
Have I shortened time, entertained
by the beating of tambourines, the playing of singing-girls,
And with a virgin wine, undeflowered by pourers,
not haggled over by topers in a tavern,
Its juice not squeezed by feet,
not branded by hands with fire,
But nourished with the milk from
the udders of two bordering brooks,[40]
Until youthfulness left it
and its two wetnurses weaned it.
Then the sun kept busy,
dyeing it in the bellies of jugs,
[79] Raising it, ready to be kissed by men,
until the two wine-pourers turned to it:
They broke the seals, revealing a sun[41]
that is aloof from males, a virgin of middle age,
An old woman, her hair nourished with musk,
her skin daubed with saffron,
Passed around to us by a black-eyed boy,
his hands as if dyed by the wine glass;[42]
On nights when I would have been thought to be
eight years old, plus one and two,
A little boy, eager and mischievous,[43]
with two birds flying with me towards love,[44]

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40 The "milk" is the water that fed the vine.

41 *Jawnah* can mean "pitch-covered jar" (such as wine is preserved in), and al-Ṭabbāʿ glosses it thus. But sense and syntax indicate another meaning, "sun", a common metaphor for wine.

42 *Aghānī*, xvi, 404 reports that Abū Nuwās, when asked "Who ranks highest among modern poets?" answered, "The one who says …", quoting this verse.

43 Translating *akhū shirratin* with its two senses, both of which are possible here.

44 It is not clear what is meant by the two birds; perhaps they are two drinking companions, or the two wine-pourers of vs. 19. The rhyme of the poem (*-ānī*) makes for numerous dual forms (see also vss. 9, 18–20, 25–26, 30, 32, 36, 39), some of which seem uncalled for.

Trailing my wrapper, uninhibited,[45]
with two mantles on me to remind me of childhood.
I commit sins, not heeding
the punishment for what the two recording angels write.[46]
The eyes of men vie to watch me,
beautiful women trip on their anklets because of me.[47]
But I abstained when grey hair restrained me {30}
and the critics abstained from criticising,
And the proud girl and her girl friends
disdained my gazing at her and got bored with me.
I mended my ways when two crows flew away
with youthfulness from the parting of my hair.
She saw a man marked by the years
with the fickleness of grey hair and fickle Time,
So she turned away, saying, "A greybeard who is poor!
Ah, two bad states to be in!"
"Thus it is", I replied, "with those bitten
by the fangs and claws of Fate!"
And I turned to a full-grown camel
broad of breast, a stallion of noble stock,
With fast-moving forelegs, eagerly stretching its neck,
tugging its girth-thongs and belly strap.
I fixed the sticks of my saddle to it,
while it moved its canine teeth impatiently.
When it decided to move its limbs [80]
and was somewhat more tractable to march,
I traversed with it the Syrian lands, wide wind-swept stretches,
where the two camel drivers lose their way,
To a king of the Banū Hāshim, a man
with noble nature, open-handed,
A banner of bravery, in whose hands are two well-springs
oozing with generosity.[48]

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45 Reading *khalīʿ*, as in all other sources, not *khalīl* as in Farrāj's text. Trailing one's *izār* or wrapper is frowned upon as a sign of pride (see Wensinck et al., *Concordance*, i, 60 s.v. *ʾzr*: *Lā yanẓuru Allāh … ilā man jarra izārahū khuyalāʾa*).

46 See Q al-Infiṭār 82:11 for the recording angels (plural, not dual).

47 Most texts have *wa-taʿthuru bī*; Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 847 has *wa-yaʿtazzu bī*, "take pride in me" (but a note records that the manuscript has *wa-yaʿthuru bī*). Instead of *fī l-ḥujūl*, Ibn Qutaybah has *fī l-ḥijāl*, "in their boudoirs, or chambers".

48 It is obvious that the panegyric has only just begun here and that the remainder of the poem has not been preserved.

The following verses with rhyme letter L are admired:[49]

Fate fatally deceived him, who used to walk so proudly
between the two ranks of lances and sword blades,
Clad in burnished armour
and a trailing iron gown.

Abū l-Shīṣ composed a wonderful elegy on al-Rashīd:[50]

The sun set in the East:
tell your eyes to shed tears!
Never yet have we seen a sun
that sets where it rises.

It is a long poem, but if we went on to quote his longer poems the book would exceed the limit that we set for it. We offer merely one or two verses as pointers to any famous long poem. Occasionally we quote a long poem in full, if it is splendid and full of interesting points, so that those who peruse this book may memorise it, if that is their desire.

Among his exquisite poems is the one he composed in praise of ʿUqbah ibn al-Ashʿath:[51]

His eyes were pressed, from yearning, with tears pouring forth,
by the remains of the tribe's abode, the tribe having moved on.
Time clothed them with two mantles of decay, though often
we donned two new ones and our road marks were novel.[52]

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49 Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 847–848; idem, *ʿUyūn*, i, 131; Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, i, 182 (attributed to Abū l-Shīṣ) and iii, 427 (with a third verse and attributed to a Bedouin woman lamenting her son); *Aghānī*, xvi, 404 (vs. 2); al-Marzubānī, *Ashʿār al-nisāʾ*, 98 (4 verses, attributed to a woman from the tribe of Taghlib lamenting her father, or a woman called Umm Jandalah al-Taghlibiyyah lamenting her brother).

50 Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 848; al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, ii, 763; al-Maqdisī, *Badʾ*, vi, 107. They are ascribed to Ashjaʿ al-Sulamī (on whom see below, § 41) in *Aghānī*, xviii, 249 and al-Jurjānī, *Asrār*, 288. The verses are said to be part of a long poem, which has not been preserved. As mentioned above, Hārūn al-Rashīd died in Ṭūs in Persia in 193/809.

51 Abū l-Shīṣ, *Dīwān*, 33–39 (44 verses, as in the present text). The poem, like countless other poems, opens with the ancient tribal theme of seeing the traces of an abandoned campsite in the desert. The theme continued to be used by many urban poets such as Abū l-Shīṣ as a traditional opening of a polythematic ode, even though it is unlikely to have been based on personal experiences in a desert.

52 The dual forms, "two mantles" and "two new ones", could refer to "night(s) and day(s)", a merism for "time" (as in vs. 10).

The site was altered, its traces obliterated, [81]
by the sky, the winds, and time followed by time.
Among the remains, after the people left, now sits a time
that disperses union—strange are its workings!
The people who dwelled here have been replaced by ostriches
and black crows that cry and lament.
I remember the place as lush, with verdant hills,
where it was good to love and play;
With gazelles on the spaces between the tribe's tents,
like bending, swaying branches on hills,[53]
Nubile, their faces well-preserved by luxury,
protected by watchful nursemaids and curtains,
Chaste, not having discovered how to hide unfaithfulness, {31}
their fingertips not bending to doubtful purpose …
The succession of nights and days has folded them, wrapped them up;
thus a tribe is broken up, now far, now near.
Many a cup,[54] its sides covered for us, after slumber,
by the wine-pourer with what grapes spat out,
Red, well-cooked by summer's embers,
kindled without fire or firewood,
Like a musk-pouch, its seal broken,
old, reddish, of al-Ḥīrah lineage,[55]
Foster-child of ages, its face unveiled by Time,
unscarred, marked only by pearly glitter,
—When the cup's mouth is imagined,
you see at its edges blazing flames,
The flow of water along the sides as if
the lustre of pearls on ingots of gold—
(Such a cup) was poured for me, night's head already hoary,
by a gazelle, dyed red by the henna of the glass;[56]

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53 The gazelles (*aẓbⁱⁿ*, pl. of *ẓaby*) are women, described as having slender waists above rounded haunches.

54 The sentence runs on until vs. 17: "(Many a cup …) was poured for me …" Al-Ḥuṣrī, *Zahr*, 502, quotes vss. 11, 16–17.

55 Al-Ḥīrah, town in Iraq, capital of the pre-Islamic Lakhmid dynasty, dwindling soon after the coming of Islam. ʿAdī ibn Zayd, pre-Islamic Christian poet from al-Ḥīrah, composed Bacchic poetry.

56 A verse quoted by Ibn al-Muʿtazz in his *al-Badīʿ*, 20, as an example of *istiʿārah* (metaphor); also in Ibn Abī ʿAwn, *Tashbīhāt*, 183; al-Thaʿālibī, *Thimār*, 323; idem, *Yatīmat al-dahr*, iii, 112.

When what is in his wrapper shakes and his upper body bends,
he is so soft, almost breaking in two,
[82] Slim of waist, plump of limbs, firm of back,
with languorous eyelids, lank in the belly,
Favourably inclined when folly leads me to him
and pretty girls meet me seeking company.
But then, after ignorant and youthful folly, I was restrained
by the memory of a youth that had passed,
By the newly appeared grey hair that brought decay,
and by rabid Fate with its days that growl at people.
Then I steered clear of the paths of folly
and I avoided the novelties of the glass and stirring music,[57]
That put down a wineglass for the drinking friend when it
comes my way, even if it were permissible for the drinker.
But suppose I wished it, a black-eyed boy would hand me a glass,
one of tall stature and slack[58] muscles.
Those nights we had in al-Ṭaff, when we were neighbours,[59]
where there was love between us and a need to be together,
Nights when Christian girls went round among us
with wine, crosses hanging from their necklaces,
While the hands of women who did not need jewels
furtively offered us delights, and hollow lutes wept and clamoured,
Until my forty years confronted me
and the blows of incidents and misfortunes made me serious,
And grey hair and old age repressed my impetuousness,
and extensive experiences and good conduct righted me.
Many a sea where one's gaze is perplexed have I traversed
with a tarred one, not because of mange or scab,[60]

Masculine forms are used here for the "gazelle" (*ghazāl*); the following descriptions could very well apply to a female but are also commonly found in poetry on attractive youths.

57 "Stirring music" is an attempt to catch two of the several senses of *ṭarab*, which denotes any strong emotion, often a mixture of mirth and sadness, and especially evoked by music and singing.

58 *Munkhazil* could mean "cut off, shortened", but here it seems to mean "slack, loose, sluggish"; cf. *khayzalā*, "sluggish gait".

59 Al-Ṭaff is a desert area outside Kufa; al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī was martyred there in 61/680. Though Abū l-Shīṣ was from a Shi'ite family, the following suggests he is thinking of nearby al-Ḥīrah with its wine-drinking Christians.

60 A mangy camel was treated with tar, but here he means a ship or boat. Abū l-Shīṣ is not known to have made sea journeys and *baḥr* probably refers to a large river such as the

Its ribs firmly joined, its back tightly fused,
its joints[61] fixed with tar and wood,
Its timbers[62] securely fastened, its back not made to bleed
by the tying of riding-saddle or packsaddle,
Broad of breast, dark, fleet, [83]
strong, its head unbridled,[63] its tail bridled,
Stubborn with its rear, swinging its chest, bulky,
almost ablaze from the excessive pace,
Wide on both sides, hollow, deep black,
noble in its course, a hump on its hull,
Marked with signs, neither complaining of fatigue or hoof-hurt,
nor complaining of biting thongs or exertion,
Its nose not bleeding from the pulling of the nose-spike,[64]
not let down by fast coursing (?) or worn-out hooves,[65]
Slender of hooves, its bones solid,
its loins firmly compacted, its sinews tautly tied.
The edge of its neck cleaves the foamy waters {32}
when the bubbles glide off and reveal its shoulders;
When it heaves with the wind in the belly of the billows,
you think that a swirling cloud of death jumps around it.
The waters toss it from all sides,
drawn towards a surface that is stable to move on (?).[66]

Tigris and Euphrates (cf. above, p. 112 note 26). The description of a boat is a variation on the common description of the camel that takes the poet in his poem to his patron. Vss. 31, 34, 36–37 are quoted in al-Rāghib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ii, 332. For a pre-Islamic sea-voyaging Arab poet and many other examples of ships as camels and camels as ships in early Arabic poetry, see Montgomery, *Vagaries*, 166–208 ("An Arab at Sea: A Poem by Bishr b. Abī Khāzim al-Asadī"). For another instance see the verses by Musim ibn al-Walīd, below, p. 340. The mixture of nautical and camelid terminology makes the present poem difficult to translate.

61 Reading *al-da'yāt* ("ribs or vertebrae near the neck") instead of *al-rāyāt* in the editions (with thanks to Prof. Abeer al-Abbasi, Jeddah).

62 The word *alwāḥ* is also used for the bones of camel, see WKAS, *Lām*, 1715b–1716.

63 This interpretation of *khalīʿ al-raʾs* follows the suggestion of Nefeli Papoutsakis (personal communication).

64 See Lane, *Lexicon*, *KhShSh*: "*khishāsh*: The wooden thing that is inserted in the bone of the nose of the camel (…) to which the nose-rein is tied, in order that he may be quickly submissive".

65 Instead of *rasm al-manāsib* Farrāj suggests two emendations: *wasm al-manāsim* ("branding of the sides of a camel's foot") or *rasm al-nayāsib* ("fast coursing on broad tracks").

66 The text of Farrāj and that of the *Dīwān* have *ilā matni muqattiri l-masāfati munjad-*

And many a she-camel[67] with pierced hooves, their noses bloody,
with spare loins, and slim flanks,
Breaking up tribes that were tightly joined,
joining break-ups that could not be made to join …[68]

The following is one of the exquisite poems of Abū l-Shīṣ, one that is widely known on earth:[69]

Abode, why do no people dwell in you,
but only some marks, their traces obliterated?
[84] Time has devastated you; or were you overcome with decay
by hardship and aridity, after prosperity?
How opulent was our life in you, one time,
the days when your site was full of familiar people!
May you be rained upon, abode of decay, by a sweeping, torrential
raincloud, with thunder and lightning, rumbling!
5 An abode abandoned by its opulence, its site now
shabby, swept by winds, desiccated;
Remains, their traces effaced by the signs of the sky,[70]
what is left of the effacing as if obliterated.
Your eyes are tapped of their tears by scattered animal dung[71]
and a wasted place where the road is reversed,

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hib, which is unmetrical and unclear. Eghbal proposes reading *muqtanni l-masāfati*, of uncertain meaning, and Farrāj suggests reading *muqtiri l-mashāfiri* ("of a camel with sated lips"), which seems improbable. I prefer to read *muqtarri l-masāfati*, (or possibly *l-masāqati*), which is also metrically more likely to be correct, but taking *iqtarra* as synonym of *istaqarra* is admittedly dubious.

67 Here the poet turns to real camels, but the quotation breaks off after two verses, leaving the sentence and the poem incomplete. Introduced as a panegyric, the poem must have been much longer, but here, as often with other poems, Ibn al-Muʿtazz is more interested in the lyrical introductions than in fulsome panegyrics or in the "unity of the poem", so beloved by modern critics.

68 If this is still about camels, it may be the truism that they take people away from one another and bring them together.

69 Abū l-Shīṣ, *Dīwān*, 70–74; Ibn al-Muʿtazz's book is the only source, apart from Ibn Abī ʿAwn, *Tashbīhāt*, 184, which has vss. 21 and 23.

70 *Āy al-samā'*, perhaps alluding to Q Yūsuf 12:105: *How many a sign is there in the sky and the earth …!*

71 *Dimnah* or its plural *diman* is often mentioned in the "abandoned abode" passages; it is one of the "Seven Words of the *Nasīb*" in J. Stetkevych, "Toward an Arabic Elegiac Lexicon", 74–88.

And by one detained in the abode, lamenting its people,
its 'necklace' worn, buried in the earth.[72]
Wild animals are now at home there; on the site
only ostriches come and go,
A site where decay sits on all sides,
its features effaced as if blotted out.
The screech-owl[73] calls in the hollows, answered
by ash-coloured ostriches looking like priests.
But often youthful folly dragged its train for me
there, when it was a place of familiarity and friends,
With many a slim-waisted woman, slender,
their ties and our ties intricately linked,
Modestly hiding themselves, wearing
robes of chastity, scorning scandalous deeds;
And I had many a purchased one from a vineyard, from al-Ḥīrah,[74]
a virgin, reluctant to be touched by men,
Not deflowered by al-Nuʿmān,
nor its glass having been sipped by Qābūs;
The Jews wrote on the seals of its jug:
"O jug, you will be detained for all time!"
She is a non-Muslim, one around whom Zoroastrian priests [85]
and Magi of the Barmak family intone their prayers.[75]

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72 *Wa-mukhayyasun fī l-dāri yandubu ahlahū | raththu l-qilādati fī l-turābi dasīsū.* Ibn al-Muʿtazz, in a passage on an abandoned site, speaks of a *mushajjajin raththi l-qilādati*, "something with abraded skin, its necklace worn" (*Dīwān* ed. al-Sāmarrāʾī, i, 631; *Dīwān* ed. Dār Ṣādir, 123 has *musaḥḥaj*, *Dīwān* ed. Sharīf, ii, 436 has *musajjaḥ*). I think *mushajjaj*, "with fractured head", is correct and that in both verses, by Ibn al-Muʿtazz and Abū l-Shīṣ, a battered tent-pin (*watid*) is described; compare a similar verse by al-Ḥusayn ibn Muṭayr, below, p. 169.

73 On the *ṣadā* see also above, p. 72 note 31.

74 He means wine; see above, pp. 114, 116. In the following verse, al-Nuʿmān is the name of several pre-Islamic kings of the Lakhmids in al-Ḥīrah, including the last, al-Nuʿmān ibn al-Mundhir (r. c. 580–602), who was a vassal of the Persian Sasanids. One of his predecessors was Qābūs ibn al-Mundhir (r. 569–573).

75 She is a *dhimmiyyah*, belonging to *ahl al-dhimmah*, "protected people", i.e., Christian, Jewish, or Zoroastrian subjects in Islamic territory. The verse mentions *hirbad*, from Middle Persian *hērbed*, "priest of a fire temple"; *majūs*, "Magi" or "Zoroastrians"; and *Āl Barmak*, the family of the Iranian Barmakids (on whom see above, p. 67 note 6). Barmak may not have been a name but a term referring to a Buddhist priest, rather than a Zoroastrian. The verb translated as "intone" is *zamzama*, "to rumble; to mumble"; it is often used in Arabic sources for the reciting of prayers and scriptures by Zoroastrians, in particular when they are dining. The Barmakids who served the Abbasids were Muslims, not Zoroastrians.

The glasses, when she reveals her face, reveal
a sun nourished by the sun; she is a bride,
Attended by reddish-white gazelles,
holding stars and suns in their hands,
Each one with quivering buttocks, black-eyed,
Chosroes his father and Bilqīs his mother,[76]
Slack in the reins, a servant in the beginning
and a companion when you feel a desire for him.
He runs with the pitcher, the strainer of which
seems dipped in safflower on account of its colour.
He pours for you the saliva of the purchased Ḥīran wine,
that was first purchased by a priest for Passover.
There is, between al-Khawarnaq and al-Sadīr, a place
where pleasure used to dwell, now effaced.[77]
{33} Perfume would waft from its aromatic herbage
and the surface would be filled with its gazelles.
Time brought an ill fate on its inhabitants and they broke apart;
Time is truly a bringer of bad luck.
We used to dwell there being happy,
those days when only a whisper of Time could be heard.[78]
But Fate built on it the buildings of decay
and on its hills lie sadness and gloom.
Many a man slain by the winecup have I watched at night,
when glasses of wine's adder had bitten him.
The glass has tied his tongue, his feet
failed him, as if he were submersed.[79]
The vintage wine has overpowered him; now it is
as if a viper had spat perdition in his cup.

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76 Several Sasanian kings were called Khusraw, rendered as Chosroes in Greek and Kisrā in Arabic. Bilqīs is the name of the Queen of Sheba in Arabic lore; her story but not her name is told in the Qur'an. This and the next verse are quoted in Ibn Abī ʿAwn, *Tashbīhāt*, 184 (where *murtajif al-dhawā'ib*, "with trembling locks", is surely an error for *murtajj al-rawādif*).

77 Al-Khawarnaq was a famous castle built near al-Ḥīrah, near Najaf in Iraq, by the Lakhmid kings for their Sasanian overlords; it is often mentioned together with al-Sadīr, another castle nearby. See e.g. *EIr*, "Ḵawarnaq" (Renate Würsch).

78 Interpretation uncertain; the word *ḥasīs* ("faint noise, whisper") is used in Q al-Anbiyā' 21:102. Perhaps the sense is that the workings of Fate (*al-ayyām*, "the days, or Time") were merely faint at the time, or already faintly noticeable.

79 *Maṭsūs* is glossed as "deeply pierced" by al-Ṭabbāʿ and the editor of the *Dīwān*. I have followed the sense given in al-Zabīdī, *Tāj al-ʿarūs*, *ṬSS*: *ṭassahū fī l-mā': ghaṭṭasahū*.

Some choice verses by him are these, taken from a longer poem:[80]

Dawn cleared the calmness[81] of slumber from his eyelids,
while at his breast the like of arrows were aimed.
Love took possession while he was unaware, turning [86]
on him with powerful, vigorous hands.
Whenever thoughts of yearning overturn his heart,
they are strengthened by breaths sighed from deep down.
The comfort and bliss of passion remind him
of bygone days that will not return.

I have been told that this poem was recited in the presence of al-Maʾmūn, who admired it exceedingly. During that session poems by several other skilful modern poets were also recited, such as Bashshār, Muslim ibn al-Walīd, and poets like them, but al-Maʾmūn was not thrilled by anything and preferred Abū l-Shīṣ.

His poems are very numerous,[82] as are the anecdotes and amusing stories about him, but we shall not deviate from what this book was set out to achieve, so that the reader will not be bored when the same subject goes on for too long, so that he may memorise these jests, amusing stories and anecdotes, and so that he will not be bothered by the reports of ancient poets and their poems, because people have so often transmitted them to the point of being bored with them. As it has been said, "everything new gives delight."[83] In our own time one is concerned rather with the poems of the moderns and the reports about them. Therefore we quote the best bit of each report and the finest bead of any necklace.[84]

80 Abū l-Shīṣ, *Dīwān*, 50. The verses are not found elsewhere.

81 Reading, with Farrāj, *awniyya l-karā*, taking *awniyy* as derived from *awn*, "calmness, rest", or "fatigue". It looks strange, however (the MS seems to have *ʾdnyy*), and the variant in the *Mukhtaṣar*, *ladhdhāti l-karā*, "the delights of slumber" may be better.

82 For another translation of this paragraph, see Gruendler, "Meeting the Patron", 76.

83 "Everything new gives delight, but I | have found that the newness of death is not delightful", a verse attributed to Ḍābiʾ (ibn al-Ḥārith al-Burjumī, 1st/7th c.) in *Aghānī*, ii, 196 and to al-Ḥuṭayʾah (1st/7th c.) in al-Bayhaqī, *Maḥāsin*, 267 and al-ʿAskarī, *Jamharat al-amthāl*, ii, 16.

84 A poem is often compared to a precious necklace. On Ibn al-Muʿtazz's attitude towards modern vs. ancient poetry see Bonebakker, "Poet and Critics", 94, where he refers to this passage.

10 Wālibah ibn al-Ḥubāb[1]

ʿAbd al-Karīm ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥīm al-Anbārī told me: Ismāʿīl al-ʿUmarī told me: I have seen al-Ḥasan ibn Hāniʾ,[2] together with Wālibah ibn al-Ḥubāb, when the former was a pretty and extraordinary young boy. He was Wālibah's servant and ran minor errands for him. It was Wālibah who educated Abū Nuwās.

Muḥammad ibn al-Haytham al-Mawṣilī told me: al-ʿĀmirī and Ibrāhīm ibn
[87] ʿAqīl told me:[3] ‖ Wālibah said, "I have seen the Devil in a dream. It was as if he came to me, saying, 'You see that servant of yours, al-Ḥasan ibn Hāniʾ?' I asked, 'What about him?' The Devil said, 'He will be quite something. I swear to God, with him I shall surely lead astray the community of Muḥammad (peace be upon him) and I shall cast love of him into their hearts!'"

The following verses by Wālibah are admired:[4]

Better than pearls or coral
are the marks made by one human on another.
An infuriated, affectionate one[5] has bitten him,
yet his heart is not angry.
He punished me, doing his utmost to take revenge:
but he rewarded me, being wholly beneficent.
If he knew that he was doing a good deed,
he would have forsaken me instead of doing good.

{34} Wālibah's poetry on libertinism,[6] outrageous behaviour, and dissoluteness was like no other's poetry. Abū Nuwās adopted this from him.[7] Among the libertine poetry by Wālibah that has been transmitted is the following:[8]

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1 Wālibah ibn al-Ḥubāb (d. c. 170/786), poet from Kufa, friend of Ḥammād ʿAjrad, Ḥammād al-Rāwiyah, and Muṭīʿ ibn Iyās, and like them suspected of heresy (*zandaqah*). He was the tutor of young Abū Nuwās. The main other sources on him are *Aghānī*, xviii, 99–107; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, xv, 676–679; Ibn Manẓūr, *Akhbār Abī Nuwās*, i, 7–12; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xxvii, 426–427; Ibn Faḍl Allāh, *Masālik* (ed. al-Jubūrī), xiv, 390–391; see also GAS, ii, 468; EAL, 802–803 (P.F. Kennedy); EI2, xi, 126–127 (E. Wagner); Wagner, *Abū Nuwās*, 24–27 and index. On Wālibah's relationship with Abū Nuwās see also Schoeler, "Wāliba b. al-Ḥubāb".

2 Abū Nuwās, on whom see below, § 33.

3 For different versions of the following, see also *Aghānī*, xviii, 106; Ibn Manẓūr, *Akhbār*, i, 9; Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān*, v, 482 (in the section *Fī jumal min akhbārihī*).

4 Not found elsewhere.

5 *Dhū ḥanaqin mushfiqun* sounds like an oxymoron, but perhaps it is intended.

6 *Mujūn* has been translated as libertinism, licentiousness, shamelessness, impudence, indecency, buffoonery, frivolity, and similar terms. See Szombathy, *Mujūn*; Meisami, "Arabic *Mujūn* Poetry"; Rowson, "*mujūn*", in EAL, 546–548; Ouyang, "*Mujūn*, *junūn*, *funūn*".

7 This is the standard account. But see below, § 62, where it is said that Aḥmad ibn Isḥāq al-Khārakī inspired Abū Nuwās in this.

Resembling an outrageous scoundrel like me
is Nuʿaym, when he drinks jugfuls.
I am given a glass by an openhanded lad,
gently flirtatious—bless this giver!
I say to him, excitedly, "Get me someone I can bugger,
even if it is a Nabataean loutish rent-boy![9]
For wine only tastes good when polluted
with ritual impurity by buggery."

In the same vein are the following verses:[10]

Wineglasses are before us,
unlucky stars are behind us:
Today is Ormuzd Day,
revered by the Zoroastrians,[11]
Who are not wrong in computing it,
and that is what they rule.
We are with a love-stricken one, [88]
and al-Basūs has left us.[12]
We gulp[13] one glass and another glass,
as Galen recommended,[14]

8 A different version, with six verses, in *Aghānī*, xviii, 105–106; Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, iv, 208–209 (s.v. Ghummā); Ibn Shākir, *Fawāt*, iv, 248; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xxvii, 427; it is attributed to Abū Nuwās in his *Dīwān*, v, 35.

9 The "Nabataeans" (Nabīṭ, Nabaṭ, Anbāṭ, or Nabāṭ; the verse has the adjective Nabāṭī), much despised in Classical Arabic texts, are not the ancient Nabataeans of Petra but the rural population of Iraq, many of whom spoke a form of Aramaic, see e.g. *EI2*, vii, 835–838, "Nabaṭ. 2. The Nabaṭ al-ʿIrāḳ" (T. Fahd).

10 *Aghānī*, xviii, 196–197 (vss. 1–3); Wagner, *Abū Nuwās in der Nebenüberlieferung*, 126–127.

11 Wālibah uses Persian: *Hurmuz-rūz*. Hurmuz, Ormuzd in Middle Persian, Ahura Mazda in Old Persian, is the creator-deity of Zoroastrianism. The first day of each month is devoted to him (*EI2*, iii, 583–584, "Hurmuz" [Cl. Huart / H. Massé]). In the introduction to the verses in *Aghānī* it is said they were recited on Nayrūz (the beginning of the Persian year) to Muḥammad ibn al-ʿAbbās and set to music by Ḥakam al-Wādī.

12 Al-Basūs was a woman whose she-camel was killed, which started the very famous pre-Islamic tribal feud that lasted forty years, called after her "the War of al-Basūs". The expression "more unlucky than al-Basūs" is found in collections of proverbs (Abū ʿUbayd al-Bakrī, *Faṣl al-maqāl*, 504, al-Maydānī, *Majmaʿ*, i, 473–475). See also below, p. 223.

13 The text seems to have *nuʿīru kaʾsan wa-kaʾsan*, "we lend a glass and another glass", which does not make sense. I have translated assuming that *nuʿīru* may be a corruption of *naʿubbu*.

14 Jālīnūs (here Jālinūs for the sake of the metre) is Galen (d. c. AD 217), the Greek physician,

At the time that a bride arrives(?),[15]
and the glass is a bride, too:
A bride pouring a bride,
one of them being a vintage drink.[16]
When, finally, we were inebriated,
and the Devil stirred us,
I saw a most wonderful thing
while we were sitting:
This one was kissing that one,
and another one was bussing this one.[17]

This poem is one of those that are attributed to Abū Nuwās by all and sundry, which is a mistake. The common people, stupidly, are bent on ascribing every poem on libertinism to Abū Nuwās, just as they do with al-Majnūn, attributing to him every poem in which Laylā is mentioned.[18]

Al-Yazīdī told me: Abū Salhab the poet told me:[19] Wālibah was a libertine and a profligate. He did not care about what he said or did. His house was at the end of a blind alley. Whenever a beggar came to him, he would let him stand and wait for a long time without responding. Once he knew that the beggar had left and had gone to the beginning of the alley, which was very long, he would open his door and shout, "Here I am, here I am!" The beggar, thinking that he had got something for him, would approach him, and when he had got near him, Wālibah would say, "May God do something for you!"

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who was extremely important in Arabic-Islamic medical history. His works began to be translated into Arabic in the late 8th century. This must be one of the earliest references to him in Arabic. Abū Nuwās also mentions him in a wine poem (*Dīwān*, iii, 174). Galen writes that wine dispels sadness and low spirits and that a moderate amount is good for digestion, but he certainly does not recommend wine categorically (Galen, *Selected Works*, 154–155 and see index s.v. "wine").

15 Following Farrāj's suggestion, reading *ānan yajī'u*; the MS is unclear and the reading by Nāzik Sābā Yārid quoted by Wagner (*innā wa-janyī*) does not convince.

16 *Khandarīs*, one of the many words for wine, believed to be from the Greek (*Rūmī*) by Arab lexicographers (al-Jawālīqī, *Mu'arrab*, 271); it has been connected with Greek χόνδρος, originally a kind of gruel (Fraenkel, *Aramäische Fremdwörter*, 163–164).

17 The poet uses the verbal forms *yuqabbilu*, the normal word for "he kisses", and *yabūsu*, derived from the Persian for "kiss" (*būs/bōs*), which is rarely found in Classical Arabic texts, though common in modern dialects.

18 Al-Majnūn, short for Majnūn Laylā, "Laylā's madman", the nickname of the semi-legendary poet Qays ibn al-Mulawwaḥ (other names are also given), said to have died towards the end of the 1st/7th century.

19 On Abū Salhab see below, §112. In *Aghānī*, xviii, 105 he is quoted as describing Wālibah and introducing the poem translated above as "Resembling an outrageous scoundrel …"

I have been told[20] that al-Mahdī mentioned him one day, saying, "How good his poetry is, and how charming! Moreover, he is erudite and has a vast memory!" Someone in his entourage said, "What stops you ‖ from taking him [89] as a drinking companion?" The Caliph replied, "His verses stop me, since he says,[21]

I said to our wine-pourer, in private,
'Put your head close to mine, like that!
Come closer, put your chest on the floor for a while,
for I am a man who has sex with his companions.'

... Damn you, would you wish him to have sex with me?"

20 See *Aghānī*, xviii, 100–101, al-Jahshiyārī, *Wuzarā'*, 149, and al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, iii, 539, where the courtier is named 'Umārah ibn Ḥamzah, a state secretary (*kātib*) and *mawlā* of the Abbasids, see Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-udabā'*, xv, 242–257. The anecdote and the verses are quoted in many sources.

21 In al-Jahshiyārī, *Wuzarā'*, the poem has four verses and a different rhyme (*-āsiyā* instead of *-āsī*).

11 Ṣāliḥ ibn ʿAbd al-Quddūs[1]

Muḥammad ibn Yazīd told me: al-ʿAwfī told me: Ṣāliḥ ibn ʿAbd al-Quddūs was apprehended, accused of heresy, and taken to al-Mahdī. When Ṣāliḥ addressed him, the Caliph was amazed by his abundant erudition and proficiency, and also by his eloquence, clarity of exposition, and copious wisdom; so he gave orders for him to be set free. However, when Ṣāliḥ was leaving, the Caliph called him back, saying, "Are you not the one who said,[2]

Someone you educate in early childhood
  is like a wooden twig, watered where it is planted,
{35} Until you see fresh leaves sprout
  after the dryness that you saw.
But an old man will not abandon his ways
  until he is covered in the earth of his grave.
Even when he repents, he will return to his ignorance,
  just as a weakened man will suffer a relapse."

Ṣāliḥ replied, "Yes, Commander of the Believers." Al-Mahdī said, "And will you then abandon your ways? We shall judge you by your own judgement!" And he gave orders for his execution.[3]

I have been told, from another side, a version that in my view is more reliable than the first, which is that the following verses were brought to the attention of Hārūn al-Rashīd, in which he insinuates things in connection with the Prophet (God bless him and his family):[4]

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1 Abū l-Faḍl Ṣāliḥ ibn ʿAbd al-Quddūs (executed during the reign of al-Mahdī or of Hārūn al-Rashīd, see below); poet from Basra, also accused of heresy (*zandaqah*) but, unlike some poets mentioned before, he composed gnomic poetry as a preacher. He has no entry in Ibn Qutaybah's *Shiʿr*, and in *Aghānī* only his death is related (xiv, 175–177). See the entries in Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh*, xxiii, 345–355; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, x, 413–415; Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, xii, 6–10; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, ii, 492–493; Ibn Shākir, *Fawāt*, ii, 116–117; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xvi, 260–261; *GAS*, ii, 461–462; *EI2*, viii, 984–985 (Mohsen Zakeri); *EAL*, 680 (G.J.H. van Gelder). On his alleged heresy see van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft*, ii, 15–20.

2 Al-Buḥturī, *Ḥamāsah*, 276; al-Mubarrad, *Rawḍah*, 183; Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, ii, 463 (five verses). Especially vss. 3–4 are often quoted, e.g. al-Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān*, i, 120, idem, *Ḥayawān*, iii, 102. Vss. 2–3 are anonymously in ps.-al-Jāḥiẓ, *Maḥāsin*, 14.

3 In one report, al-Mahdī is said to have struck Ṣāliḥ "with his own hand, with a sword-blow that cut him in two pieces" (Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh*, xxiii, 348; see also Ibn Abī Ṭāhir Ṭayfūr, *Baghdād*, 266–267 and al-Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, ii, 483, tr. *The Works*, 1143–1144).

4 Some later sources allude to this version about the compromising verses, but they omit the verses themselves, e.g. Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh*; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*; Ibn Khallikān,

He robbed the poor man of his wife
and the man's eyes streamed with pearly tears.
The poor man had not had his pleasure, [90]
no, not even a tenth part of his pleasure.
I seek refuge with gentle God for us,
lest injustice should be part of His decree!

May God's curse be upon him if he actually composed this![5] Al-Rashīd asked him, "Are you the one who composed these verses?" Ṣāliḥ replied, "No, I swear to God, Commander of the Believers! I have never been a polytheist, not for one moment. Do not shed my blood only on a doubtful suspicion! The Prophet (God bless him and his family) has said,[6] 'Refrain from applying the fixed punishments on the basis of doubtful suspicions as much as you can.'" The Caliph's heart began to soften and he was inclined to abandon what he had decided about him, moved by his eloquence and explanation. He recited the Qur'an[7] until he had taken pity on him, and he gave orders for Ṣāliḥ to be set free. When he was about to leave his presence, the Caliph said, "Recite to me your poem with rhyme letter S!" Ṣāliḥ recited it, and when he had reached the verse "But an old man will not abandon his ways | until he is covered in the earth of his grave", the Caliph said, "Old man, these words resemble those other words! This poem is of the same style as that poem." He meant the verses that were attributed to him. "Now we shall follow the example of your own recommendation!" Then he gave orders for Ṣāliḥ to be beheaded and his body to be crucified on the bridge.[8]

Abū Jaʿfar told me: Ziyād ibn Aḥmad told me: Some lettered people, Ṣāliḥ ibn ʿAbd al-Quddūs among them, met in a session. They recited poems to one another until it was time to perform the ritual prayer. Everyone stood up, and so did Ṣāliḥ. He performed the ritual ablution correctly and prayed correctly. One of the others said, "So you are praying now, while your belief is as people say?"

Wafayāt (all mention al-Mahdī, not Hārūn). The "poor man" is Zayd ibn Ḥārithah, a manumitted slave who had been adopted by the Prophet as his son and who married Zaynab bint Jaḥsh, a first cousin of the Prophet, at the latter's suggestion. Subsequently, Zayd divorced her, again, it is said, at the instigation of Muḥammad, who married her in turn. The precise course of events is disputed, but clearly the matter was controversial, and this is reflected in the Qur'an (Q al-Aḥzāb 33:37, mentioning Zayd).

5 Farrāj thinks that this sentence may have been added by a copyist.

6 Similar statements are found in canonical Hadith compilations.

7 Perhaps Q al-Ḥujurāt 49:12: *You who believe, avoid much suspicion! Some suspicion is a sin.*

8 The short version of *Aghānī*, xiv, 177 merely says that al-Rashīd had the poet executed on the basis of Ṣāliḥ's verse about an old man who does not mend his ways.

Ṣāliḥ replied, "It is the rule of the land and the custom of the body".[9]—God knows best if this is a true report. In fact, there is nobody who has composed as much as this man on the renunciation of this world, on the enticement toward
[91] Heaven, on incitement to obeying ‖ God Almighty, on commanding to live virtuously, and on mentioning death and the grave. All his poems consist of adages and maxims. Admired are the following verses:[10]

Worry returned to me; I spent the night addressing it,
while observing the stars and watching them,
Because of the ficklenesses of Fate afflicting me,
with its fangs and claws that wear me out.
Long thought kept me sleepless. I marvel
at Fate whose marvels are never ending.
I see an incapable man[11] called staunch on account of his tyranny,
but if piety is pretended, its blades are blunted;
And a modest man called incapable on account of his modesty;
but for his piety, his ways would not have incapacitated him;
And a stupid man favoured in all his affairs,
made master by his friends and relatives,
{36} Though devoid of prudence or piety in his affairs,
nor any ample benefits being counted as his talents.
It is not through a man's incapacity that he fails to be rich,
nor does one acquire wealth by means of clever tricks,
But only through God's opening open or closed hand.
No one can vie with Him or vanquish Him!

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9 He speaks in *saj'*, rhymed prose. In the version in al-Murtaḍā, *Amālī*, i, 144 he adds "… and keeps family and children safe."

10 The attribution of the several verses is more than usually complex. Vss. 4–5, 8 are attributed to Abū Bakr al-'Arzamī in al-Marzubānī, *Mu'jam*, 351–352; Ibn Ḥamdūn, *Tadhkirah*, viii, 102; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, iv, 2. Vss. 3–9 are attributed to Abū Ya'qūb Isḥāq ibn Ḥassān al-Khuraymī (on whom see below, § 55) in Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, *Bahjat al-majālis*, i, 145–146. Vss. 3–5, 8–9 are quoted anonymously in Ibn Ḥibbān al-Bustī, *Rawḍat al-'uqalā'*. Vs. 10 is found anonymously, as quoted by al-Khalīl ibn Aḥmad, in Ibn Durayd, *Fawā'id*, 22; attributed to Muḥammad ibn Yazīd in Ibn 'Abd Rabbih, *'Iqd*, ii 252; attributed to Ibrāhīm ibn Ḥassān (perhaps an error for Isḥāq ibn Ḥassān al-Khuraymī) in al-Māwardī, *Adab al-dunyā wa-l-dīn*, 20; to Ṣāliḥ ibn Janāḥ in Ibn 'Asākir, *Tārīkh*, xiii, 328; and, as often happens with pious verses, to 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, *Dīwān*, 24. Farrāj says in a note (p. 476) that some verses of the poem are in Abū Tammām's poem beginning *Hunna 'awādī Yūsufin* …, but no such verses are found in the *Dīwān*, i, 216–222. For many more details on verses that belong or may belong to the poem, see Weipert, "Gedanken".

11 *Bahjat al-majālis* has *fājiran*, "an immoral man", instead of *'ājizan*.

When the Merciful perfects a man's reason,
his noble character and qualities will be perfect.

One wonders: how could a heretic say such things? How could anyone who composed this have been a heretic?

The following verses are also admired:[12]

Is there no one who weeps for people who dwell
in this world, yet have left this world?
It is as if they have never inhabited any other home
and did not know anything but anguish and tribulation.

Choice verses are also the following:[13]

By Him who raised heaven with His omnipotence
and made the earth a resting place for His servants:[14]
Whoever persists in sins will surely perish,
whether you believe my words or want to be obstinate!

Aḥmad ibn Ibrāhīm, the dream interpreter, told me:[15] I saw Ṣāliḥ ibn ʿAbd al-Quddūs in a dream. He was laughing and looked cheerful. I asked him, "How has God treated you? How were you saved from what you were involved in?" He answered, "I came to a Lord to whom no secret is hidden.[16] He received me in His mercy and said, 'I know that you are innocent of what you were known for and of what you were accused of believing.'" [92]

His poems are numerous, but since they are found abundantly among everyone we restrict ourself to those we have quoted.

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12 Also in Abū Tammām's "lesser *Ḥamāsah*" called *al-Waḥshiyyāt*, 137 (in the chapter of *marāthī*, elegies); anonymously in ps.-al-Jāḥiẓ, *Maḥāsin*, 59 and al-Bayhaqī, *Maḥāsin*, 534 (in chapters on *ḥabs*, imprisonment). According to al-Murtaḍā, *Amālī*, i, 146–145, where a piece of seven verses is quoted including vs. 1, Ṣāliḥ composed them while in prison (see also Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, iii, 154–155; al-Qifṭī, *Inbāh*, i, 96–97, each with five verses, quoting a lost work by Abū l-ʿAlāʾ al-Maʿarrī). Verses of the same poem are quoted anonymously in al-Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān*, iii, 230 and Ibn Qutaybah, *ʿUyūn*, i, 81–82; and, attributed to al-Faḍl ibn Yaḥyā al-Barmakī, in al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, iv, 256.

13 Quoted in al-Zawzanī al-ʿAbdalakānī, *Ḥamāsat al-ẓurafāʾ*, i, 176.

14 Alluding to Q al-Nāziʿāt 79:28 and al-Nabaʾ 78:6.

15 See al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, x, 415; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh*, xxiii, 355; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, ii, 493; Ibn Shākir, *Fawāt*, ii, 117. In all these sources the narrator is called Aḥmad ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān.

16 Partly quoting Q al-Ḥāqqah 69:18.

12 Ibrāhīm ibn Sayābah[1]

Ibn Abī Qubādh told me: al-ʿAwfī said: [Ibrāhīm ibn Sayābah was a *mawlā* of Thaqīf. Someone else said that his father][2] Sayābah was a cupper; Ibrāhīm was lampooned by ʿUtbah al-Aʿwar, alluding to his father's trade:[3]

Your father's sword belt has worn out his shoulder,
so many warriors and heroes has he bled!
He takes their money and their blood,
without being afraid of their revenge.
Necks of kings bend humbly,
everyone, barefoot or shod.

He was accused of heresy. Al-Mahdī had him arrested and confiscated his books, but nothing incriminating was found in them, so the Caliph protected him and employed him as his secretary. He would write at the Caliph's audiences and in his presence. He was one of the most eloquent and articulate men. After a while, however, the Caliph found that there was some truth after all in the accusations, and he removed him from office and from his presence. After that, things went badly with Ibn Sayābah. He was forced to beg. He was a naturally gifted poet, argumentative and voluble. One of the poems by him that we have memorised is the following:[4]

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1 Abū Isḥāq Ibrāhīm ibn Sayābah (d. 198/814), a *mawlā* of the tribe of Thaqīf, was a state secretary (*kātib*) and minor poet. He, too, was suspected of heresy (see e.g. Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, ii, 404). Entries on him are in *Aghānī*, xii, 87–92; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, vi, 12–14 (two entries); *GAS*, ii, 527; *EI2*, iii, 909. His name is sometimes misspelled as Ibn Shabābah (e.g. Ibn Abī ʿAwn, *Tashbīhāt*, 292, al-Jahshiyārī, *Wuzarāʾ*, 203, 297) or transliterated as Ibn Sayyābah (e.g. al-Jāḥiẓ, *The Book of Misers*, tr. Serjeant, 190). The metre of a lampoon by Abū Nuwās on him (*Dīwān*, ii, 90, where the name is vowelled as Ibn Siyābah) proves that Sayyābah is incorrect.

2 The parenthesis is taken from the *Mukhtaṣar*, see Farrāj's Appendix, 431.

3 Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh*, xxxviii, 291 has an entry on ʿUtbah al-Aʿwar (the One-Eyed), son of the Umayyad Caliph Yazīd ibn Muʿāwiyah (r. 60–64/680–683); but he is too early, and a more likely candidate is ʿUtbah ibn Abī ʿĀṣim al-Ḥimṣī al-Aʿwar, who exchanged poems with Abū Tammām (al-Marzubānī, *Muʿjam*, 106). The verses are in al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, vi, 12, idem, *Ghayth*, i, 102. They are also, preceded by two more verses, in al-Ḥuṣrī, *Jamʿ*, 140 and al-Thaʿālibī, *Nihāyah*, 132–133, where they are said to be by ʿUtbah al-Aʿwar on Ibrāhīm ibn Sayyār (*sic*); in al-Sharīshī, *Sharḥ al-Maqāmāt*, iv, 222 these five verses are ascribed to Ibn Kunāsah (d. 207/823 or 209/824). The trade of a cupper (*ḥajjām*) was considered one of the lowliest.

4 The last verse is quoted in al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, vi, 12; the rest is not found elsewhere.

The bringer of good tidings, chief of bringers of good tidings, brought
to me from him the mightiest of the mighty:[5]
"Rejoice, Abū Isḥāq! You have attained riches [93]
and what you asked from him. Now reward my messengers!"
So I began to give, in return for the good tidings,
the gold and silver that my hands contained,
And when finally my hands were empty
and I had donated my robe and my cloak,
And everything that one could think of and call for, {37}
and on top of that my signet ring,
Then what I had hoped for and expected
turned to despair, a prey taken by the Chimera.[6]
Before today I used to be called a Muslim,
but today Unbelief has become one of my names.

His poems are good and there are fine reports about him, but it is not possible to be exhaustive, or else the book would turn from conciseness to prolixity.

5 Interpretation of *jā'a … minhu 'alayya bi-a'ẓami l-'uẓamā'ī* not wholly clear.

6 "Chimera" is my translation of *al-'anqā'*, usually called *'anqā' mughrib*, a mythical and proverbial bird, supposedly a large creature that one hears of but never sees. See e.g. Ron-Gilboa, "*'Anqā' Mughrib*: The Poetics of a Mythical Creature".

13 Muṭīʿ ibn Iyās[1]

Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Ziyādī told me: Abū Najd, the poet, said:[2] Muṭīʿ composed a praise poem on Maʿn ibn Zāʾidah, a fine, eloquent poem. When Maʿn heard it, he said, "Ibn Iyās, if you wish we'll give you a reward, or if you prefer, we shall compose a praise poem on you!" Muṭīʿ was too embarrassed to ask for a reward, but was reluctant to opt for a panegyric poem, since he was poor. So he wrote the following verses and sent them to Maʿn:

Praise from an Emir is the best gain
for a man of property, a rich man.
But Time has pared my bones
and there is no medicine for me but dirhams.

When Maʿn read this, he laughed and said, "He is right, there's no medicine like dirhams!" And he rewarded him.[3]

Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad also told me:[4] Abū Najd told me: Muṭīʿ ibn Iyās went to a female friend of Ḥammād ʿAjrad, to reproach her because she had abandoned him, and because Muṭīʿ was Ḥammād's friend. He said, in verse,

[94] You owe him an excuse, for he always
humbled himself to please you ...

1 Muṭīʿ ibn Iyās (d. 169/785), a poet from Kufa, friend of Wālibah and other "libertine" poets, and like them accused of heresy. Associated with the Umayyad caliph al-Walīd ibn Yazīd and later with Abbasid princes. He has a long entry in *Aghānī*, xiii, 273–336; see also al-Shābushtī, *Diyārāt* (ed. ʿAwwād), 247–257, (ed. & tr. Kilpatrick), 336–351; al-Marzubānī, *Muʿjam*, 454–455; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, xv, 301–302; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh*, lviii, 367–372; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xxv, 640–648; GAS, ii, 467, ix, 288; EI2, vii, 797–799 (Ch. Pellat); EAL, 561–562 (P.F. Kennedy). His poetry has been collected in Grunebaum, "Three Arabic Poets" (Part One), 167–204.

2 Abū l-Najd is mentioned once more by the author (p. 485) but has not been identified with certainty. In *Aghānī* the story is told by Muḥammad ibn al-Faḍl al-Sakūnī, a minor poet and contemporary of Ḥammād ʿAjrad (GAS, ii, 537); he could be identical with Abū Najd. For Maʿn ibn Zāʾidah, see above, p. 67 note 5. Famous as a general and patron of poets, he was himself a competent poet and he has a short entry in GAS, ii, 453. For the story and the verses, see *Aghānī*, xiii, 323–325 (where also the opening 19 verses of Muṭīʿ's panegyric poem are given); Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh*, lviii, 368–369; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, xv, 319.

3 *Aghānī* mentions 30,000 dirhams, a robe of honour and a mount to carry them; Ibn ʿAsākir and al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī mention one thousand dinars (gold, whereas dirhams are silver).

4 In the version of *Aghānī*, xiii, 284 and Ibn Ẓāfir, *Badāʾiʿ*, 331 it is not Ḥammād but Yaḥyā ibn Ziyād al-Ḥārithī (mentioned in the next anecdote) who asks Muṭīʿ to mediate between him and his girlfriend.

Ḥammād stood up, in the presence of the woman, and kissed Muṭīʿ's head. "May God reward you!", he said, "You are a good friend! You have expressed my own thoughts and you have rid me of my bad feelings." The woman laughed. Ḥammād continued, "May I always enjoy such kindness from you, my brother!" Thereupon Muṭīʿ said,[5]

> … So leave him, woman, and be Ibn Iyās's friend,
> may he redeem you with his life this morning!

Ḥammād, angry, said, "You son of a So-and-so,[6] this is not why I brought you here! You speak on behalf of yourself, not me!" The woman burst out laughing and stuck to Muṭīʿ, leaving Ḥammād, who almost went out of his mind and kept complaining to people about Muṭīʿ.

Muṭīʿ was a friend of Yaḥyā ibn Ziyād.[7] He never parted from his side, night or day. Each one, fondly loving, thought the world of the other. But then they fell out and they broke all contact with each other. Muṭīʿ said this about it:

> Yaḥyā and I used to be like two hands of one man;
> we would hang out together in all things.
> If I were afflicted by Fate, he too would be afflicted,
> if one suffered pain, it would pain the other too.
> Or, when he slept, our four eyes would sleep,
> and if he were silent I would not make a sound.
> But when at last grey hair loomed on my head
> and quickly spread on his cheeks,
> Slanderers did their utmost between us
> and the bond that united us was almost severed.
> Enemies of us never stopped
> aspiring to separate us,
> Until, seizing on a misstep, {38}
> he kindled the fires of hatred, rapidly.[8]

5 He continues with the metre and rhyme of the preceding verse.

6 Instead of the common euphemism *ibn al-fāʿilah* ("son of a woman who does something") the other sources have the equally common *ibn al-zāniyah* ("son of a whore").

7 Yaḥyā ibn Ziyād al-Ḥārithī was another Kufan poet, see *GAS*, ii, 467–468, and another member of the group accused of heresy; see *Aghānī*, xiii, 278: "Muṭīʿ ibn Iyās, Yaḥyā ibn Ziyād al-Ḥārithī, Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, and Wālibah ibn al-Ḥubāb were inseparable. They would drink together (…) and all were accused of heresy". The story is in *Aghānī*, xiii, 308, with 10 verses; al-Mubarrad, *Kāmil*, iii, 284 (6 vss.).

8 In the *Aghānī*, the poem is more conciliatory, with a verse beginning "But I do not blame

Admired, too, is his poem beginning as follows:[9]

Now if you will not be friends with anybody except
one whose shoe will never slip as long as he lives.
[95] Then you will never find him, even doing your utmost:
where is he, whose like is almost never found?
My friend is he who will forgive a sin
and to whom the least coming from his brother suffices;
It is not one who makes a false show of affection
or whose deeds are contrary to what he says,
One whose bond with a friend lasts one day,
or two days if it lasts longer, and then the cord is severed.

Of his love poetry the following verses are admired:[10]

I have loved, as much as I could love,
the woman with a mole and a necklace,
Whose mouth, even just after waking from sleep,
imitates the taste of honey beaten from the comb,[11]
A gazelle, black-eyed,
with a mole on her cheek,
As if that mole were the moon
when full, on the night of a lucky star (?).[12]

Yaḥyā for what he did", and where the subject of "he kindled the fires of hatred" is not Yaḥyā but the devil (*al-shayṭān*) mentioned in a preceding verse.

9 From a poem addressed to Yaḥyā, who had sworn an oath that he would never speak with him again, eleven verses in *Aghānī*, xiii, 305–306 (of which Ibn al-Muʿtazz quotes vss. 5–7, 10–11). See also Abū Tammām, *Waḥshiyyāt*, 176–177 (5 vss. as Ibn al-Muʿtazz); al-Jāḥiẓ, *Manāqib*, 38 (vss. 1–3 of Ibn al-Muʿtazz's text); al-Washshāʾ, *Muwashshā*, 16 (vss. 1–2); al-Tawḥīdī, *Ṣadāqah*, 154 (vss. 1–3, anonymously, with two more verses of the poem attributed to Muṭīʿ, 206); Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh*, lviii, 371 (vss. 3–5).

10 The verses have not been found elsewhere.

11 I follow Eghbal and Farrāj in reading *wa-taḥkī* instead of *wa-aḥkī* as in the MS.

12 The precise sense of *laylat al-saʿd* is not clear to me, nor do I understand why a black mole is likened to the full moon. Perhaps the text is corrupt and it is the face that is compared to a full moon, the mole being one of its spots (cf. the verse by Muslim ibn al-Walīd, below, p. 342).

Muṭīʿ ibn Iyās composed a lot of poetry on all subjects. He is one of the dissolute libertines, the subject of curious anecdotes. But if we exhausted the reports of every poet and quoted all their poems this book would no longer correspond to our purpose. Muṭīʿ died in the year 169.[13]

13 The editions of Farrāj and al-Ṭabbāʿ both have 199 (*sanat tisʿ wa-tisʿīn wa-miʾah*), corresponding with AD 814–815, but the MS has the correct year (*sanat tisʿ wa-sittīn wa-miʾah*, 169/785); see also *Aghānī*, xiii, 335, stating that he died three months after al-Hādī's succession. Farrāj may well be right when he says in a note that the last sentence is likely to have been added by a copyist, since Ibn al-Muʿtazz does not normally give dates (similar death dates are also given at the end of §§ 20, 24, 29, 37, 91).

14 al-Khalīl ibn Aḥmad[1]

Isḥāq ibn al-Ṣalt al-Anbārī told me: al-Muʿallā ibn Jaʿfar al-Saʿdī told me: al-Khalīl ibn Aḥmad was the most knowledgeable of all people about syntax and obscure vocabulary,[2] the one who had the most accurate knowledge of the particulars in those fields. He was the teacher of all, unique in his time. He invented the science of poetic metres and opened it up, making it the "scales of poetry".[3]
[96] This came about because he went along the fullers' street in Basra ‖ and heard the different sounds made by the rhythmically pounding mallets.[4] He thought about the matter and said, "I shall make this the basis for something nobody has done before me!" And he based poetic prosody as people now know it on these sounds. He was an intelligent and clever man, who also knew about his-

1 Although al-Khalīl ibn Aḥmad al-Farāhīdī (d. c. 175/781) composed some poetry, he is above all one of the greatest Arabic philologists, author of the first Arabic dictionary (*al-ʿAyn*), important grammarian, and discoverer and systematiser of Arabic poetic metres. Entries on him are not in books on poets but in many works on philologists and general biobibliographical works, including Abū l-Ṭayyib al-Lughawī, *Marātib*, 54–72; al-Zubaydī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 47–51; al-Sīrāfī, *Akhbār al-naḥwiyyīn*, 30–31; al-Marzubānī, *Nūr al-qabas*, 56–72; Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, i, 113–118; Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, xi, 72–77; al-Qifṭī, *Inbāh*, i, 376–382; Ibn al-Anbārī, *Nuzhat al-alibbāʾ*, 45–47; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, ii, 244–248; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xiii, 385–391; al-Suyūṭī, *Bughyah*, i, 557–560; GAS, ii, 613, viii, 51–56, ix, 44–48, xvi, 117–120, EAL, 432 (W. Stoetzer); EI2, iv, 962–964 (R. Sellheim); Talmon, *Arabic Grammar in its Formative Age*. On his poetry, see Weipert, "Al-Ḫalīl Ibn Aḥmad—A Poet?"

2 *Al-naḥw wa-l-gharīb*. The former is also loosely used for grammar in general; the latter is a branch of lexicography.

3 *Mīzān al-shiʿr*; the word *wazn* means "weighing" or "weight" but also "poetic metre". Classical Arabic metres are quantitative, based on patterns of long and short syllables. Al-Khalīl not only distinguished the various poetic metres and their variants but classified them in groups of related metres, graphically represented on five circles. His approach is ingenious but to some extent overly systematic, for the sake of symmetry at the expense of practical application. Nevertheless, Khalīlian metrics came to dominate the study of Classical Arabic poetic prosody.

4 This resembles the story about the poet Abū l-ʿAtāhiyah, who hears a fuller beating cloth and thereupon invents a new metre (see below, p. 326 and Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 791–792); and these stories are, in turn, reminiscent of the report about Pythagoras, who, it is said, heard the pounding of mallets on anvils in a smithy and was inspired to study musical intervals (see Strunk [ed.], *Source Readings in Music History*, 74, quoting Gaudentius; James, *The Music of the Spheres*, 32–33, quoting Iamblichus). In another version al-Khalīl hears the hammers of the copper beaters (*ṣaffārīn*) instead of the mallets of the fullers (*qaṣṣārīn*), see Ḥamzah al-Iṣfahānī, *Tanbīh*, 124; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, ii, 245, al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xiii, 386. It is reported that his brother thought that al-Khalīl had lost his wits when he saw and heard him tapping a metal bowl with a stick, saying "*fāʿilun mustafʿilun faʿūlun*", when scanning a metre using dummy words (al-Marzubānī, *Nūr al-qabas*, 88, al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xiii, 390). See also van Gelder, *Sound and Sense*, 113–114.

tory and biographies. In addition, he was a proficient poet, erudite and brilliant. He also wrote a well-known book about melodies and musical notes. He is the author of the book called *al-ʿAyn*, in which he brought together all the roots of the speech of the Arabs.[5]

Muḥammad ibn Yazīd al-Mubarrad[6] told me: Abān ibn Razīn al-Baṣrī told me: Yūnus the Grammarian asserted that al-Khalīl ibn Aḥmad, intelligent and perspicacious as he was, could derive the sense of all languages through Arabic.[7]

Abū l-ʿAbbās Aḥmad ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Muḥammad ibn Jaʿfar said: al-Ḥasan ibn al-Muhallabī said:[8] al-Khalīl ibn Aḥmad was a devoted friend of al-Layth ibn Naṣr ibn Sayyār.[9] Al-Layth was one of the best in penmanship of his time, he excelled in erudition, he was knowledgeable about grammar, poetry, and recondite vocabulary. He was employed as a secretary to the Barmakids, flying high with them during their days of power, for they admired his skill. Then al-Khalīl ibn Aḥmad travelled[10] to him and became a close friend; al-Layth found him a "sea" of knowledge, and he made him financially independent. Al-Khalīl wanted to reciprocate with a present that befitted him. He deliberated, thinking of one thing and then another; he knew that neither money nor material goods would make much of an impression on him, because he possessed all

5 The more common meanings of the word *ʿayn* are "eye" and "well", but it is also the name of the letter or sound transliterated as ʿ. Classical Arabic dictionaries are arranged by roots (a root consists of mostly three consonants, sometimes four or five). Al-Khalīl's arrangement of his Arabic lexicon does not use the common order of the alphabet (*alif, bāʾ, tāʾ, thāʾ* …) or the older *abjad* order (*alif, bāʾ, jīm, dāl* …), but an arrangement devised by him based on the places of articulation of the phonemes, starting with the phoneme furthest back in the mouth, working its way to the front of the mouth, and complicating easy reference even further by keeping root permutations together (e.g. *ʿ-r-b*, *ʿ-b-r*, *r-ʿ-b*, *r-b-ʿ*, *b-ʿ-r*, *b-r-ʿ*). See Wild, *Das Kitāb al-ʿAyn*, Baalbaki, *The Arabic Lexicographical Tradition*, 282–303.

6 Al-Mubarrad (see above, p. 4) was one of the author's teachers; Yūnus the Grammarian (al-Naḥwī) is Yūnus ibn Ḥabīb (d. 182/798), on whom see *GAS*, viii, 57–58, ix, 49–51, xvi, 271–272, *EI2*, xi, 349 (R. Talmon).

7 Compare the report claiming that he, after one month of scrutiny, was able to understand a Greek letter sent by the Byzantine Emperor (al-Zubaydī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 51).

8 On the following story, see al-Marzubānī, *Nūr al-qabas*, 59; Abū l-Ṭayyib al-Lughawī, *Marātib*, 58; Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, xvii, 45–46; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xxiv, 415; al-Fīrūzābādī, *Bulghah*, 179; al-Suyūṭī, *Muzhir*, i, 76–79. On the authorship of *al-ʿAyn* see especially Talmon, *Arabic Grammar*, 91–126 and Schoeler, *The Oral and the Written*, 142–163, notes 214–223, idem, *The Genesis*, 90–93.

9 Al-Layth (ibn al-Muẓaffar) ibn Naṣr (d. shortly before 187/803) was a son or a grandson of the Umayyad governor of Khorasan, Naṣr b. Sayyār. On al-Layth, see *EI2*, v, 711, "al-Layth b. al-Muẓaffar" (R. Sellheim).

10 From Basra to Baghdad.

of that already in plenty, and he knew that nothing would please him more than something nice and erudite. So he exerted himself and wrote his book *al-*
{39} *ʿAyn*, compiling it for al-Layth ibn ‖ Naṣr, especially for him and no one else.[11] Al-Layth was much pleased with this, and he rewarded him with one hundred
[97] thousand dirhams, apologising for ‖ giving him short shrift. Al-Layth began to study it day and night, never tiring of looking in it. He would leave in the morning to work for the Barmakids and be "on hot stones", as it were, until he could return to the book and read it in the evening. In the end he had memorised half of it.

Al-Layth was married to a paternal cousin of his. She was a distinguished, noble, wealthy, and beautiful woman and she fondly loved her cousin. Then al-Layth bought a precious, exceedingly beautiful slave girl for a lot of money, settling her in the house of a friend and enjoying her as a concubine. But his cousin wife found out and became terribly jealous. "By God," she said, distressed, "I'll make him angry, I do not mind what comes of it!" She said to herself, "If I anger him in his possessions he won't care, it wouldn't bother him. But I see he is besotted about that book. He has given up all kinds of amusement and pleasure and always looks in that book. By God, I'll make him agonise about that!" Then she took the entire book and burned it. In the evening al-Layth, returning from the palace of the Barmakids, entered his home, his only concern being his book. He shouted to the servant, telling him to bring it to him, but the book was not to be found. He flew into a rage, thinking that it had been stolen. He assembled his servants and threatened them. One of them said, "Master, the lady has taken it!" He rushed to her, to placate her and get her to return the book. "Give the book back", he said to her, "and I'll give you the girl; I shall not touch her again!" But she took him by the hand and led him to the room where she had burnt it. When he saw the ashes and realised that it had been burnt, he was aghast. One might have thought that he had lost an enormous sum of money, or a child, or worse.[12] He had memorised half of the book, so he needed

11 Writing books for the general public had not yet been introduced in Islam; Sībawayh's *Kitāb* on grammar was the first, al-Khalīl's *al-ʿAyn* was probably intended to be (cf. Schoeler, *The Oral and the Written*, 26).

12 For another woman intent on destroying her husband's books, see Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿah, *ʿUyūn*, ii, 1061 (Arabic), iii, 1191 (English): The wife of al-Mubashshir ibn Fātik (5th/6th century) is angered by his obsession with his books; she throws them into a water-basin. They are retrieved but are badly damaged. Franz Rosenthal considers this story "undoubtedly apocryphal" (*EI2*, vii, 282) and Gregor Schoeler calls the story of the burning of *al-ʿAyn* "entirely legendary" (*The Oral and the Written*, 155). Perhaps these two great scholars are unwilling or unable to imagine the reality of a disaster of such magnitude. For a remarkable parallel, see John Aubrey's *Brief Lives*, i, 183, on Thomas Cooper, of Oxford (later

the remaining half. Al-Khalīl had died, so he sought it everywhere on earth, but without success; nobody possessed a copy. So he retrieved one half from memory and, for the remaining half he assembled the scholars among his contemporaries. "What do you want?", they asked him. "Make something like it!" he answered. So they did, but they did not reach al-Khalīl's level and did not measure up to him. So now you can see what is current among people: if you look at it closely, you will see that ‖ the book consists of two halves, the first one being more accurate and perfected, and the second half falling short. [98]

Among the poetry by al-Khalīl ibn Aḥmad the following verses are admired:[13]

There's nothing but night followed by day,
year upon year, month upon month:
Mounts that take what is new on to decay,
and bring the corpse of a noble man to his grave,
Leaving the wives of a jealous man to another,
and dividing up the savings amassed by a miser.

Current everywhere are these verses:[14]

Tell the astrologer about me
that I do not believe in what the stars decree,

Bishop of Winchester): "Dr. Edward Davenant told me that this learned man had a shrew to his wife, who was irreconcileably angrie with him for sitting-up late at night so, compileing his Dictionarie [*Thesaurus linguae Romanae et Britannicae*, Londini, 1584; dedicated to Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, and Chancellor of Oxford]. When he had halfe-donne it, she had the opportunity to gett into his studie, tooke all his paines out in her lap, and threw it into the fire, and burnt it. Well, for all that, that good man had so great a zeale for the advancement of learning, that he began it again, and went through with it to that perfection that he hath left it to us, a most usefull worke."

13 Al-Marzubānī, *Nūr al-qabas*, 63–64; al-Jurjānī, *Kināyāt*, 104–105 (with an additional verse); al-Zamakhsharī, *Rabīʿ*, i, 90; attributed (with an additional verse) to Abū l-ʿAtāhiyah in al-Zajjājī, *Amālī*, 101 (but not found in his *Dīwān*); to Muḍarris ibn Ribʿī in Ibn Dāwūd, *Zahrah*, 560; and to Ḥātim al-Ṭāʾī in al-Baṣrī, *Ḥamāsah*, ii, 414; to "a man of Ṭayyiʾ" in Ibn Nāqiyā, *Jumān*, 119 (with an additional verse); anonymously in al-Thaʿālibī, *Muntaḥal*, 195; see also Weipert, "al-Ḫalīl", 73.

14 Al-Mubarrad, *Kāmil*, ii, 37; al-Zajjājī, *Amālī*, 65; al-Zubaydī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 47–48 (with an additional verse); al-Marzubānī, *Nūr al-qabas*, 65 (with an additional verse); al-Rāghib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, i, 88; Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, *Bahjat al-majālis*, ii, 115 (with an additional verse); al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xiii, 390; Ibn Nubātah, *Sarḥ al-ʿuyūn*, 271 (but not in the short version edited and translated by Webb); Weipert, "al-Ḫalīl", 69.

Knowing that what will be and what has been
is the necessary divine decree of the Guardian.

Widely quoted are also these verses:[15]

If you knew what I am saying, you would forgive me,
or if you knew what you are saying, I would rebuke you.
But you don't know what I am saying, so you rebuked me,
and I know that you are ignorant, so I have forgiven you.

{40} Some choice verses by him were addressed to Sulaymān ibn Qabīṣah ibn Yazīd ibn al-Muhallab, who had written to him, asking him to visit him in al-Sind, where he was the governor:[16]

Tell Sulaymān that I am well off, without his support,
not in need, though not possessing wealth.
Livelihood comes through divine decree; weakness does not
diminish it, nor does the craft of a cunning man increase it.

Sulaymān sent him a splendid gift from al-Sind, but al-Khalīl returned it, saying,[17]

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15 Ibn Qutaybah, *ʿUyūn*, iii, 103; al-Dīnawarī, *Mujālasah*, ii, 98; Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, ii, 223; Ibn Wahb, *Burhān*, 198; al-Qurashī, *Jamharah*, 37; Ibn Wakīʿ, *Munṣif*, 190; al-Thaʿālibī, *Lubāb*, 161; Ibn al-Anbārī, *Nuzhah*, 45–46; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, ii, 247; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xiii, 390; al-Suyūṭī, *Bughyah*, i, 558; and see Weipert, "al-Ḫalīl", 75. In al-Qurashī, *Jamharah* the verses are preceded by al-Khalīl's words, in prose: "There are four people: a man who knows and knows that he knows—he is learned, so get to know him! And a man who knows but does not know that he knows—he is unaware, so wake him up! And a man who does not know but knows that he does not know—he is ignorant, so teach him! And a man who does not know and does not know that he does not know—he is stupid, so avoid him!"

16 No one of this name is known. In several of the sources mentioned below the addressee is named as Sulaymān ibn Ḥabīb al-Muhallabī, a member of the Muhallabī family, on whom see *EI2*, vii, 358–360 (he is mentioned p. 359b) and see also above, p. 86. Al-Sind is the region around the lower Indus River. The verses are in al-Naḥḥās, *Ṣināʿat al-kitābah*, 38; al-Dīnawarī, *Mujālasah*, vii, 340 (3 vss.); al-Qālī, *Amālī*, ii, 269 (4 vss.); al-Marzubānī, *Nūr al-qabas*, 66 (5 vss.); al-Zubaydī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 47 (5 vss.); al-Ḥuṣrī, *Zahr*, 956 (5 vss.); Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, xi, 76 (4 vss.); al-Qifṭī, *Inbāh*, i, 379 (4 vss.); Ibn al-Anbārī, *Nuzhah*, 46 (3 vss.); Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, ii, 246 (4 vss.); al-Suyūṭī, *Bughyah*, i, 558. Also see Weipert, "Al-Ḫalīl", 77–78.

17 In Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 429, the verses are attributed to Abū l-Ghūl al-Ṭuhawī; in Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, i, 283 the poet is named as Sulaymān al-Aʿmā, on Sulaymān ibn ʿAlī but ibid.,

There came something[18] from Sulayman that the Devil
would much marvel at, if it were mentioned.
Do not marvel at something good slipping from his hand:
an unlucky star waters the earth at times.[19]

The reports and marvels connected with al-Khalīl are numerous. He did not compose much poetry, because he was preoccupied more with scholarly matters than with poetry. What we have mentioned about him should suffice.

v, 336 they are ascribed to Bashshār, also on Sulaymān ibn ʿAlī. Al-Ṣūlī, *Awrāq*, iii, 15 attributes them to Isḥāq ibn Wahb ibn Samāʿah, on Sulaymān ibn al-Manṣūr. Although various later sources name al-Khalīl as the poet, Weipert ("Al-Ḫalīl", 81), considering the conflicting ascriptions, concludes that al-Khalīl is "not a serious candidate".

18 The text has *khaṣlah*, "trait, characteristic, quality"; other versions have *saw'ah*, "a bad thing" (Ibn Qutaybah, Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih) or *zallah* "lapse, misstep" (al-Ṣūlī).

19 Traditional meteorology associates rain with stars and constellations.

[99] 15 Salm al-Khāsir[1]

He is Salm ibn ʿAmr. Al-Yazīdī told me: Abū ʿAbd Allāh al-Jammāz said to me:[2] "Salm al-Khāsir is my maternal uncle." I asked al-Jammāz, "Why is he called al-Khāsir, 'the Loser'?" He laughed and said, "He is called the Loser because he devoted himself to the study of the Qur'an for a short period. When he became impoverished, he felt distressed and returned to some extent to his former sinful and libertine behaviour. He sold a copy of the Qur'an that he had inherited from his father and with the money he bought a pandore;[3] others say that he sold a Qur'an copy and bought a book of poetry with the money. When this became known among the people he was called the Loser. They said to him, 'Damn you, is there anybody on earth who has done as you did? Selling a Qur'an copy and buying a pandore with the money?' He replied, 'No one has sought Satan's favour the way I did. I surely must have made him happy.'"

It is said that he acted as a libertine in this, but he was not irreligious. Those who assert that he bought poetry for the price of a Qur'an copy tell about him that when he had earned a considerable sum with his poetry dedicated to the caliphs and the Barmakids, he said, "I am the Winner, not the Loser!"

He was one of the naturally talented, proficient poets. He was a pupil of Bashshār ibn Burd, the blind poet. When Bashshār composed this verse:[4]

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1 Salm ibn ʿAmr ibn Ḥammād, called al-Khāsir (d. 186/802), a poet from Basra, born in a family of *mawlā*s of the second caliph, Abū Bakr; a pupil of Bashshār ibn Burd and his *rāwī* (transmitter), panegyrist of caliphs al-Mahdī and al-Hādī, of the Barmakids and others. He has entries in *Aghānī*, xix, 260–287; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, x, 198–202; Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, xi, 236–241; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, ii, 350–352 (as "Sālim al-Khāsir"); al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xv, 302–304; Ibn Faḍl Allāh, *Masālik* (ed. al-Jubūrī), xiv, 405–406. Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, ii, 404 lists him among poets who adhered to *zandaqah*. See also *GAS*, ii, 511–512, ix, 295; *EI2*, viii, 997; (G.J.H. van Gelder); Grunebaum, "Three Arabic Poets" (Part Two).

2 Al-Jammāz has an entry below, § 94. On the possible origins of the nickname al-Khāsir see also *Aghānī*, xix, 261–263, where also alternative explanations are given: Salm squandered an inherited fortune on books of poetry and *adab*; or he spent a large fortune earned with his poetry on social gatherings with literate friends (al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, x, 199, Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, xi, 237).

3 Arabic *ṭunbūr*, a long-necked, stringed, plucked musical instrument; see *EI2*, x, 624–628, "Ṭunbūr" (J.-C. Chabrier). The ancient Greek *pandoura* may, like the word *ṭunbūr*, go back ultimately to an unknown Middle Eastern language.

4 Bashshār, *Dīwān*, ii, 56, in a poem of 19 verses. For the anecdote about this and the following verse by Salm see also *Aghānī*, iii, 200, xix, 263–265 and many later sources; Grunebaum, "Three Arabic Poets", Pt. Two, 69–70. The two verses are often quoted as an illustration of good borrowing in works on rhetoric and eloquence, including the famous textbook by al-Khaṭīb al-Qazwīnī, *Talkhīṣ al-Miftāḥ* (see e.g. *Shurūḥ al-Talkhīṣ*, iv, 485–486). Salm's verse is preceded by six verses in al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, x, 201.

He who respects other people will not get what he needs:
good things are won by someone who is reckless and keen,

Salm took this motif and expressed it better, more eloquently and concise: [100]

He who respects other people will die of grief:
delight is won by the bold.

When Bashshār had composed his verse, he said, "No one has said anything like this before me!" Then Salm composed his verse. Bashshār's transmitter said, "I went to Bashshār and said, 'Abū Muʿādh, Salm has said something that is better than that verse that you were so pleased with!' Bashshār asked, 'What is it?' So I recited it to him. 'Aargh!' said Bashshār, 'There goes my verse, by God! I wish he wasn't a *mawlā* of the family of Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq, so that I could tear him and his kin apart with my lampoons!' "—This, incidentally, shows that Bashshār's religion was sound. He banished him from his side, but when one of his friends talked to him about the matter, Bashshār accepted him again.

Salm is one of the naturally talented, expert poets.[5] His poetry contains many original and splendid things. Of the verses we quoted it was Salm's verse that became popular, and not Bashshār's.

Among the fine poetry transmitted as being by Salm is his poem on Yaḥyā ibn ‖ Khālid.[6] It is said that he received an enormous sum for it. People said, {41} someone who acts in accordance with what the verses of his poem describe is worthy of being a vizier. These are the verses:[7]

Religion and the world will remain together
when the Caliph and the Vizier remain.
Yaḥyā jealously defends Islam's sacred territory
when other jealous men lose their prudence.

5 Al-Jāḥiẓ also counts him among *maṭbūʿūn*, "naturally gifted" poets (*Bayān*, i, 50); *Aghānī* (xix, 261) calls him "a naturally gifted poet, composing in various genres (*shāʿir maṭbūʿ mutaṣarrif fī funūn al-shiʿr*)".

6 The Barmakid vizier, see above, p. 67.

7 *Aghānī*, xix, 284 (vss. 23–24); vss. 23–24 together with another verse are attributed to ʿInān (on her see below, §127), praising Yaḥyā's son al-Faḍl, in Ibn al-Jarrāḥ, *Waraqah*, 42 and al-Jahshiyārī, *Wuzarā'*, 204–205; these three verses are attributed to Ashjaʿ al-Sulamī (on whom see below, §41) in *Aghānī*, xviii, 238. Cf. also al-Bayhaqī, *Maḥāsin*, 374, al-ʿAskarī, *Dīwān al-maʿānī*, i, 69, without attribution. See Grunebaum, "Three Arabic Poets", Pt. Two, 67–68.

Islam is maintained only by someone who is a refuge,[8]
who may be asked for protection and who asks [God's] protection.[9]
Your two kinds of day, one of benefice and one of harm,[10]
are both protected by high-mindedness and nobility.
You are not distracted from your affairs
by the luxury of kingship or a cushy carpet.
[101] To you we wend our way from every direction;
you have insight in every matter.
You have tested all people, Arabs and non-Arabs;
no one's course of life is like yours.
Every matter, whether words or deeds,
when you put your hands to it, is a trifle.
By your hands people's fates are brought about,
abundant rain flows from your favours.
You are mighty in war and in peace;
joined with your qualities is triumph.[11]
You know what Fate is, whether good or evil;
you have knowledge of every opinion.
You requite not from rancour
even though a supporter may show opposition.[12]
All people are indebted to you for riches or forgiveness:
both are flowing lavishly.
To you, as a skilled doctor,
neither bellies or backs of matters are hidden.[13]
You are clad in ample garments of praiseworthy deeds,[14]
adorned with fine embroidery.

8 I adopt Eghbal's suggestion, reading *muʿādh* or *maʿādh* (both forms are in Grunebaum's text) for *m.ʿār*.

9 The text has *yustajāru wa-yastajīrū*; one could read the last word as *wa-yastakhīrū*, "asks (God's) guidance", but that would replace a common form of paronomasia (or rather *figura etymologica*) with another that would be unusual in Salm's time.

10 Mentioning the combination of benefice (towards subjects) and harm (towards enemies) is a commonplace of Arabic panegyric.

11 I follow Farrāj's note, suggesting reading *yuḍāfu ilā manāqibika l-ẓuhūrū* for the unintelligible *yuḍāfu ilā manākibika l-ṭ.hūrū*.

12 *Tajnīs* (paronomasia): *muẓāharah* ("opposition"), *ẓahīr* ("supporter").

13 The word *ṭabb*, "expert, skilled", is cognate with *ṭibb*, "medicine" and *ṭabīb*, "physician", which prompted the poet to use a medical metaphor.

14 Alternatively, *maḥāmid* means "praises", in which case the verse refers to praise with "finely embroidered" poems. But such self-reference in *madīḥ* poetry normally comes towards the end of the poem, followed by a hint at remuneration.

You are not tempted by the trappings of this world
to which the eyes of viziers may be drawn.
Neither little nor much of your personal fancy has harmed
religion for the sake of this world.[15]
Before you, viziers were all equal,[16]
the older one merely preceding the younger.
No right was transgressed by any rise
or drop of your personal likings.
Affairs were resolved by a Barmakid
for whom pulpits and throne are illuminated.
You have carried oppressive burdens, relieving us,
relieving Islam, if a grateful one gives thank.
We have a King, yes, and the Vizier of a King[17]
on whom shines the light of a garment of grey hair.
His impulse and his reflection are of a kind [102]
whenever a weighty event befalls him.
His view is forever the soundest,
when both those asking and giving counsel alike are blind.
There is no one who has both planted and reaped affairs
like Yaḥyā when he is resolved and proceeds.
When one day the efforts of just boasting will stand up
on their feet, or when a strong man is praised,
Then there is no benefit like that of Abū ʿAlī
and nobody who will reach what he reaches.

Admired, too, is his poem on al-Mahdī:[18]

15 Translation uncertain. I read *wa-mā in nāla min dīnin li-dunyā | qalīlun min hawāka wa-lā kathīrū*; Grunebaum reads *min daynin*, the Arab editors leave the word unvowelled. The MS would allow reading *ladaynā* instead of *li-dunyā* but I prefer to keep the pair of *dīn* and *dunyā*.

16 Like Grunebaum (but unlike the Arab editors) I follow the suggestion of Muṣṭafā Jawād mentioned by Eghbal, reading *fawḍā* instead of *gharqā* ("drowned"), which does not make sense to me.

17 The poet uses *malik* and *malk*, both meaning, "king"; Grunebaum reads the second as *mulk*, "realm, kingship", which is also possible. "Considered to be a term of abuse, *malik* was not officially assumed by Muslim rulers in the early centuries of Islam; on the other hand, it was commonly applied, sometimes with unconcealed scorn, to non-Muslim monarchs" (*EI2*, vi, 261 [A. Ayalon]). Poets, however, do not seem to have shared this view because they often use *malik* in a positive sense, referring to a caliph.

18 Grunebaum, "Three Arabic Poets", Pt. Two, 75–76. In *Aghānī* (xix, 284–285) it is said Salm recited a variant of the opening hemistich to al-Mahdī's son Hārūn al-Rashīd: "Say to the

Say to the abodes: Peace be on you![19]
Is it farewell or a brief visit?
Nothing is left of you or them
but skins and bones.
{42} I was drunk with passion,
as a sinner is drunk with wine.
My heart is disturbed inside,
my eyes shun sleep.
If you are resolved, let your worry
go between being praised or blamed,[20]
And leave the creatures that breathe through their nose-rings
swimming in the sea of darkness,[21]
Plunging into the mirages in the desert,
docile, their reins held high,
Wrapped in hot sweat,
turbanned with frothing slaver,
All stepping toe-to-sole,
separated, cut-off from the herd,[22]
[103] They whisper with sand-grouse whispers[23]
and they make long strides with ostrich-strides.
Many a stretch they crossed,
passing between the sounds of screech owl and echo,[24]

---

loved ones: peace be on you!", upon which al-Rashīd responds with a rhyming second hemistich: "May God let them live in peace!" Salm continues with another hemistich, "Saying farewell, or staying". Al-Rashīd seems to become annoyed and responds in prose, "May God let them live in peace, whatever!" Salm recites vs. 2 but al-Rashīd, clearly disgusted by its morbid theme, dismissed him without hearing the rest of the poem (for which Ibn al-Muʿtazz's text is the only source) and did not reward him. But in vss. 16 and 22 the addressee is called Muḥammad, which refers to al-Mahdī, not al-Rashīd.

19 The MS and the editions have "Say to the pulpits (*ḥayyi l-manābira*) …", which would be strange in an *aṭlāl-cum-nasīb* introduction, and I have adopted the version of the *Mukhtaṣar*, which has *ḥayyi l-manāzila*.

20 Interpretation not certain; perhaps the poet tells himself not to care whether his passion is lauded or blamed. I read the last word, with al-Ṭabbāʿ and the MS, as *wa-dhāmī* (from *DhYM*), instead of *wa-dāmī* as in Farrāj's edition.

21 Camels are sometimes said to "swim", on account of their flailing legs when moving fast.

22 *Kharqā'*, "putting its sole upon the ground before the sole", said to be good thing in camels; with thanks to Gert Borg for help with this verse (personal communication).

23 The sound of the sand-grouse (*qaṭā*) is usually described as if saying its name, not as a whisper.

24 It is difficult to translate *bayna ṣadan wa-hāmī*, because both *ṣadā* and *hām* could mean

Until they returned from their nocturnal journey,
lean like crescent moons in their girths;
Nothing remains of them
but eyes and bleeding hooves.
They follow the strides of a swift she-camel,
strongly built, stretching her reins;
She went, hurrying in front of them,
like an arrow shot by an archer,
To the Commander of the Believers,
Muḥammad, the best of mankind:
He strung together caliphate,
charity, and courage;
A king the impact[25] of whose opinion
is more cutting than a sword edge.
He decrees the affairs of the believers
with prudence and resolve.
All Quraysh—and they are
nobles, sons of nobles,
The best of those who ever trod on pebbles[26]
whether mature man or lad—
Say: Muḥammad has surpassed all kings
just as the licit surpasses the forbidden.[27]
Hail to thee, Commander of the Believers!
For you are guaranteed to be hale.
You have all noble qualities
in the abode of departing or residence.
Those who depend on the protection of that hero-king
are safe from misfortunes.
O Best of those in whose hands [104]
are comprised so many [acts of protection],[28]

"screech owl", and because *ṣadā* also means "echo". Moreover, both words may refer to the spirit of a murdered, unavenged man according to the belief mentioned above (pp. 72, 123).

25 The editors gloss *ḍarībah* as "nature, character", but the comparison to a sword edge suggests something more graphic.

26 For this idiom see e.g. *Aghānī*, iii, 337, xxi, 292.

27 He uses the Islamic legal terms *ḥalāl* and *ḥarām*.

28 The verse is not only incomplete in the MS (I follow Farrāj's suggested completion) but probably also corrupt, for the profusion of "hands" in this and the following verse looks wrong (... *man ḍaminat yadāhu kam fī yadayka* ... || *kam fī yadayka* ...).

So much generosity is in your hands
as well as various kinds of death!
The Caliph's cistern of generosity
quenches the burning thirst of the parched;
The Caliph holds in his hands
the buckets of pardon and vengeance.

Salm al-Khāsir believed that al-Mahdī was in fact the mahdi as described by the Messenger of God (God bless and preserve him and his kin).[29]

Admired is also his poem on al-Mahdī's son Mūsā al-Hādī:[30]

I asked the abodes and their remains,
but they do not respond to those who ask them;
Dwellings that became deserted after we were there,
with the wind dragging over them its trains.
Of many a red wine that has an effect on those who only look
have I drunk the sweet liquid,
For since the people departed I have been in close contact
with wine glass and singing girls.
So often have I raised the curtains of kings
and have I steadily applied my verse to the generous among them!
And famous gatherings have I been able to attend,
where noble men may be won over by those who can.[31]
God has laid into your hands
both the lives and the deaths of people.
We found you mentioned in the scriptures of the ancients
as the reviver of souls and their killer.

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29 The term *mahdī*, "rightly guided one", refers to a messianic restorer of religion who is expected to appear before the end of the world, according to Muslim traditions said to go back to the Prophet Muḥammad. That al-Manṣūr's son and successor Muḥammad took the regnal name al-Mahdī probably shows that he wished to emphasise the religious nature of the office of caliph. There are no signs, however, that he saw himself as a messianic figure. See *EI2*, v, 1230–1238, "al-Mahdī" (W. Madelung), 1238–1239, "al-Mahdī, Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad" (H. Kennedy).

30 Mūsā al-Hādī died suddenly after a reign lasting only one year (169–170/785–786). The poem, which must have had a much longer panegyric section than is quoted here, is not found in other sources. See Grunebaum, "Three Arabic Poets", Pt. Two, 75.

31 Translation of the paronomastic *niltu—yunalu—nālahā* somewhat uncertain; the second word, unlike the first and second, may not be derived from the root *NYL* ("to obtain, achieve") but from *NWL* ("to donate, confer"): "where noble men are rewarded".

Mūsā, who resembles Abū Jaʿfar,[32]
is the one who gives those who ask their desires.
If you had not been there, after his death,
mothers of beasts would reject their newly born babies.[33]

Also admired is his poem on success in attaining one's needs:[34] [105]

Destinies govern people's affairs
and for one's livelihood one must call upon Him who can give it.
When God allows granting a need
success comes to you in due course.
When a man is contented he has acquired riches
and takes the saddle off his mount.[35]
Do not beg people for their favours,
but ask God for His favour.

Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Nawfalī told me: I have never succeeded in finding a poet who knew more about pre-Islamic poetry than Salm al-Khāsir. Salm liked to jest; he was gentle, a panegyrist of monarchs and prominent persons, who would amply reward him with gifts. He received much and spent it on his friends, [giving them presents. He was fond of drinking wine and spent much on it, joined by his friends][36] and other cultured people. Abū l-ʿAtāhiyah composed the following verses in which he mentions Salm:[37] {43}

Exalted be God! O Salm ibn ʿAmr,
greed has humbled the necks of men!

32 Al-Hādī's grandfather, al-Manṣūr.

33 An image of extreme distress or confusion.

34 Following Farrāj's emendation, reading *al-ḥājah* instead of *al-ḥājib*. Grunebaum, "Three Arabic Poets", Pt. Two, 74. Vss. 2 and 4 are in al-Zamakhsharī, *Rabīʿ*, ii, 656; al-Ibshīhī, *Mustaṭraf*, i, 114; al-Tanūkhī, *Faraj*, v, 21 (with an additional verse); al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xv, 304 (with a different additional verse). Vss. 4, 2 and 3 are found in a poem of six verses quoted (and composed?) by a certain Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh in Ibn Abī l-Dunyā, *Iṣlāḥ al-māl*, 133.

35 This hemistich is found in a poem by Khālid ibn Yazīd al-Kātib, on whom see below, § 115 (Arazi, *Amour divin et amour profane*, 149).

36 The parenthesis is taken from the *Mukhtaṣar* (Farrāj's Appendix, 431).

37 See *Aghānī*, iii, 75, 83, 98, xix, 269, 270, 276. They are vss. 8–9 in a poem of ten verses in Abū l-ʿAtāhiyah, *Ashʿār*, 296–297. Abū l-ʿAtāhiyah has a section below, § 36.

Suppose the whole world were brought to you, as a favour,
will it not eventually vanish?

When Salm heard these verses, he said, "Damn that son of such-and-such a woman! He has hoarded at home tens of thousands of dirhams[38] while I just have my two robes and nothing else, and he calls me greedy!"[39]

His poems are abundant, very numerous, but what we have quoted should suffice.

38 *Budūr*, "prize-purses" (see above, p. 73).

39 Salm retaliated with a poem accusing Abū l-ʿAtāhiyah of being a hypocrite who incites others to renunciation of worldly things but does not practise it himself (*Aghānī*, iii, 76, xix, 269–270, Grunebaum, "Three Arabic Poets", Pt. Two, 64–65).

16 Ibn Mayyādah[1]

Ibn al-Akhwaṣ Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Malik al-Thaqafī told me: ʿAmr ibn Ayyūb al-ʿĀmirī informed me: Ibn Mayyādah went to al-Walīd ibn Yazīd ibn ʿAbd al-Malik[2] and recited some poetry that he had composed on him. ‖ The [106]
Caliph liked it and commanded him to stay at his court, which he did. Having stayed with him for a lengthy period, he composed a praise poem for the Caliph in which he said,[3]

Would that I knew if I shall spend a night again
on Ḥarrat Laylā, where my kinsmen raised me,[4]
The land where my amulets were hung on my neck[5]
and cut off again when my mental faculties reached me;
Or whether I shall ever hear the sounds of a herd of camels,
grazing from one fertile dell to another?
If you are keeping me away from my native lands,
at least sustain me liberally and then reunite us!

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1 With Ibn Mayyādah (d. c. 136/754 or some years later), who grew up in the Arabian Peninsula, Ibn al-Muʿtazz goes back in time, for he is sometimes counted among the last generation of "classical", pre-*muḥdath* poets, whose poetry is still used by philologists as linguistic evidence (*Aghānī*, ii, 269); "Poetry was sealed with al-Rammāḥ (ibn Mayyādah)" (al-Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān*, iii, 349, quoting al-Aṣmaʿī); on this matter see Alqarni, "Negotiating Abbasid Modernity", in which Ibn Mayyādah gets ample attention. He has entries in al-Balādhurī, *Jumal*, xiii, 121–131; Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 771–773; *Aghānī*, ii, 260–340; al-Marzubānī, *Muwashshaḥ*, 356–358 (among he *Islāmiyyūn*, not the *muḥdathūn*); Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh*, xviii, 200–207; Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, xi, 143–148; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xiv, 143–144; GAS, ii, 442–443, ix, 287; EAL, 350 (P.F. Kennedy); EI2, iii, 878 (Ch. Pellat). He was al-Rammāḥ ibn Abrad, of the tribe of Murrah (Dhubyān), but he is generally known as the son of his mother, Mayyādah (and is thus duly listed by Muḥammad ibn Ḥabīb in his book on poets called after their mother, *Man nusiba ilā ummihī min al-shuʿarāʾ*, 91). Mayyādah was not Arab, possibly Berber or Slavic, but her son claimed she was Persian, and he boasted of his Persian ancestry (*Aghānī*, ii, 261).

2 The Umayyad caliph and poet, see above, p. 94.

3 Muḥammad ibn Ḥabīb, *Man nusiba ilā ummihī*, 91; Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 772; al-Ṣūlī, *Akhbār Abī Tammām*, 22–23; *Aghānī*, ii, 310–311, 324; Abū Dāwūd, *Zahrah*, 374; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh*, xviii, 201–202; Ibn Mayyādah, *Shiʿr*, 199–204 (nine verses, with many more sources and commentary).

4 On Ḥarrat Laylā (Laylā's Basalt Plain, or Lava Field, on the way to Medina) see Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, s.v. (where five verses of the poem are quoted).

5 On amulets (*tamāʾim*, originally speckled stones threaded on a cord) hung upon children see e.g. EI2, x, 177–178, "Tamīma" (T. Fahd). Ibn Mayyādah used the same phrase in a verse in which he boasts of his mixed ancestry: "Isn't a boy descended from Chosroes and Ẓālim [a remote Arab ancestor] | the noblest of those who had amulets hung on their necks?" (*Aghānī*, ii, 261, 262, 267).

Al-Walīd said to him, "I shall command that you be given one hundred black she-camels, one hundred red she-camels, the former being all the brighter compared with the latter, and the latter all the darker compared with the former. Take these letters to the tax collector[6] of the tribe of Kalb and he will give them to you." Ibn Mayyādah took the letters and went to the man. When the latter read the letter, he said, "Forgive me for not having the curly-haired!"—for the Caliph had ordered they should be curly-haired.[7] But Ibn Mayyādah refused to accept any except the curly-haired, as the Caliph had ordered for him. After he and the tax collector had wrangled about the matter, Ibn Mayyādah wrote to inform al-Walīd of the case, adding to his letter the following two verses:[8]

Have you not heard that the tribe of Kalb
intend to resist giving your present to me?
They want me to accept them in two different colours
but you promised a present of curly-haired dark ones!

Al-Walīd wrote to the tax collector, threatening him and commanding him to give Ibn Mayyādah the camels as ordered, with their camel herds and equipment. He drove them and arrived with them at his tribe.

His name is al-Rammāḥ ibn Abrad [ibn Tharyān, a descendant of Murrah ibn
[107] Ghaṭafān],[9] Mayyādah being his mother. He is of the Banū ‖ Murrah ibn ʿAwf ibn Saʿd ibn Dhubyān.[10] As a young boy Ibn Mayyādah would beat his mother and say,[11]

6 *Muṣaddiq*, collector not only of the voluntary *ṣadaqah*, "alms tax" but also the obligatory *zakāt*; *EI2*, viii, 708–716, "Ṣadaḳa" (T.H. Weir & A. Zysow); *EI2*, xi, 406–422, "Zakāt" (A. Zysow).

7 In al-Balādhurī, *Jumal*, xiii, 124 it is merely "one hundred she-camels" and in the versions of Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 772–773 and Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-buldān* al-Walīd speaks of "one hundred dark, curly-haired she-camels", which is consistent with the following verses, unlike Ibn al-Muʿtazz's version.

8 Al-Balādhurī, *Jumal*, xiii, 124; Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 773; *Aghānī*, ii, 312; Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, s.v. Ḥarrat Laylā; Ibn Mayyādah, *Shiʿr*, 109–110.

9 The parenthesis is taken from the *Mukhtaṣar* (ed. Farrāj, Appendix, 431), reading Tharyān instead of Taryān. A marginal note in the *Mukhtaṣar* adds: "He composed panegyric poems on al-Walīd ibn ʿAbd al-Malik", viz., the Umayyad caliph who reigned 86–96/705–715, unless it is an error for al-Walīd ibn Yazīd ibn ʿAbd al-Malik.

10 For his lineage see Ibn al-Kalbī/Caskel, *Ǧamharat an-nasab*, i, 127 and *Aghānī*, ii, 261 (both slightly different from Ibn al-Muʿtazz's text, below).

11 Al-Balādhurī, *Jumal*, xiii, 128; Muḥammad ibn Ḥabīb, *Man nusiba ilā ummihī*, 91; Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 771; *Aghānī*, ii, 263 (three verses), 264; al-Mubarrad, *Kāmil*, i, 96; Ibn Mayyādah, *Shiʿr*, 174.

Be firm, Mayyādah, for lampooning rhymes![12]

He means that he will attack people with invective verse, and that they will attack him likewise, mentioning his mother. His father was a descendant of Ẓālim ibn al-Ḥārith ibn Ẓālim al-Murrī. He boasts of this, saying,[13]

Drawing from the wells of glory, the clan of Ẓālim watered me,
drawing with well-ropes reaching to the stars.

Ibn Mayyādah lived until the days of the Abbasids. Meeting Jaʿfar ibn Sulaymān ibn ʿAlī, the governor of Basra, he recited:[14]

Jaʿfar of boons, O Jaʿfar! {44}
May your death never be announced, nor you ever be buried![15]

Jaʿfar, seeing how weak and slight this verse was, said, "I say, Rammāḥ!" Ibn Mayyādah answered, "At your command, Emir!" Jaʿfar continued, "You praise that sinner al-Walīd ibn Yazīd with such fine poems,[16] and now you praise me with something like this!" "Emir," replied the poet, "A poet's encomium is in proportion to the reward. Why should I worry about the sins of al-Walīd, who gave me four hundred she-camels with their herders, slaves, and equipment? I swear to God, I shall never say that he is a sinner, even if you were to cut off my head! His beneficence prevents me from doing so." The emir admired his gratitude and loyalty towards the man even after his death and the passing of his dynasty. He gave orders for him to be given four hundred she-camels and

12 He uses a very unusual verb, *iʿranzama* (root ʿRZM). *Qawāfī* (plural of *qāfiyah*) normally means "rhyme words", but especially in older texts it may refer to lampoons, as if hurled at the opponent's neck (*qafā*), as Goldziher has argued, quoting this verse ("Über die Vorgeschichte der Hiǧâ-Poesie", 97).

13 Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥayawān*, v, 384 (3 vss.); Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 772; Ibn Mayyādah, *Shiʿr*, 83–85 (7 vss.). The second hemistich is attributed to Ibn Munādhir (on whom see below, §19) in al-ʿAskarī, *Ṣināʿatayn*, 295.

14 Jaʿfar ibn Sulaymān (d. 174/790–791 or a year later, see al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xi, 106) was a paternal first cousin of the first two Abbasid caliphs. The verse is in al-Balādhurī, *Jumal*, xiii, 125 (followed by three more verses); Ibn Mayyādah, *Shiʿr*, 123 (in a poem of 15 verses).

15 The first hemistich was used by Ibn al-Mawlā (d. c. 165/781), also on Jaʿfar ibn Sulaymān (*Aghānī*, iii, 302). In *Ansāb* the second hemistich is "Would that you will never perish nor ever grow old!"

16 A poem with rhyme letter B is especially praised (*Aghānī*, ii, 304–306, Ibn Mayyādah, *Shiʿr*, 57–68).

said to him, "Now compose something like the poetry you composed on him!" Then Ibn Mayyādah said,[17]

I was a man who once hunted game, the game of love,
but now I have said farewell to the hunting of game.[18]
I removed the strings from the bow of pleasure
and my arrows are worn and have lost their heads.
[108] When my kinfolk dwell in al-Jināb and her kinfolk
in Munʿaraj al-Ghullān, near Dhū Adhābil,[19]
Then say: A dear friend she was, but stingy to you with her company;
what remained of the bonds with her has been severed.
They try to make me hope for being with you, though I think
I shall not meet you henceforward.
Whatever I may forget, I shall not forget what she said,
while her tears filled her kohl-adorned eyes:
"Enjoy this short day, for it is bound
to be followed by long days and months."

Ibn Mayyādah composed fine love poetry, in the style of the Bedouin with their pure Arabic speech. He was naturally gifted. He composed these verses:[20]

17 See Ibn Mayyādah, *Shiʿr*, 204–212, a poem of 27 verses, of which Ibn al-Muʿtazz quotes vss. 15–17 (vs. 17 being very different), 4, 1, 13–14. See also Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh*, xviii, 207; al-Baṣrī, *al-Ḥamāsah al-Baṣriyyah*, ii, 110; Ibn Dāwūd, *Zahrah*, 262 (last two vss., anonymously). The poem does not seem to refer to Jaʿfar ibn Sulaymān, nor are the verses of the poem quoted in *Aghānī*, ii, 281–282, 293–294 said to be connected with Jaʿfar. Note that in Ibn al-Muʿtazz's text the first verse does not begin with a short syllable, a feature in the metre of *ṭawīl* called *kharm* found almost exclusively in opening lines, which seems to show that it may be the original opening (Ibn Mayyādah, *Shiʿr*, has the regularised form, *wa-kuntu* instead of *kuntu*).

18 Literally, "I was a man who once shot *zawāʾil*, i.e., animals of the chase …", a metaphor for women. See Lane, *Lexicon*, *zwl*, where Ibn Mayyādah's verse is quoted and translated, or rather interpreted, as "I was a man having the art of making women incline to me, once; but I have become such that I have relinquished the art of making women to incline to me".

19 I follow *Aghānī*, ii, 282 in reading al-Jināb and al-Ghullān (instead of al-ʿAllān in Farrāj's edition). Munʿaraj al-Ghullān is found in a poem by Ḥātim al-Ṭāʾī (*Dīwān*, 45). Instead of Dhī Adhābil, *Aghānī* has Dhī Arāʾil; it is not clear which is correct, and the place name has not been found in geographical dictionaries.

20 They are in Abū Tammām's *Ḥamāsah*, see al-Marzūqī, *Sharḥ*, 1333–1334; also *Aghānī*, ii, 302 (vss. 2–3 and three more verses, as lyrics for a song); al-Qālī, *Amālī*, i, 165; and many later sources. See Ibn Mayyādah, *Dīwān*, 71–77 (a poem of 16 vss. of which Ibn al-Muʿtazz quotes vss. 5–6, 13–14).

It is as if my heart is in a hand that clings to it,
afraid that someone will cut its string.
Separation, I fear, is imminent and I think
that I will have to bear it and fall in with it.[21]
By God, I don't know whether passion will vanquish me,
if parting happens in earnest, or I shall vanquish passion.
If I can, I shall vanquish and passion will not;
but the like of what I have suffered will vanquish the sufferer.

These are motifs and expressions that most poets are unable to achieve, for he combines the command and pure language of the Bedouin with the beauties and wit of the modern poets. He also says,[22]

I say to the riders, seeing them returning
at the well of the tribe of Sulaym, of Ṣurād and Ashjaʿ,[23]
"If you arrive safe and sound, then convey
the greeting of someone hurt, shot by two arrows!"[24]

Choice verses are the following:[25]

Weeping welled up and a loudly cooing one responded to it,[26]
dust-coloured, weeping despite the merriment;[27]

21 Al-Marzūqī explains *la-maḥmūlun ʿalayhi* as "announcing that it will not happen with his agreement or participation".

22 Ibn Mayyādah, *Dīwān*, 168 (with three more vss.).

23 Sulaym and Ashjaʿ are tribes; Ṣurād is not known and the editor of the *Dīwān* suggests it is a variant of al-Ṣārid, a tribe belonging to Murrah.

24 The two arrows were no doubt shot by the eyes of the beloved.

25 Ibn Mayyādah, *Dīwān*, 106; not found in other sources.

26 I follow the reading suggested by Muṣṭafā Jawād (quoted by Eghbal): *wa-ʿāraḍat'hu*, instead of *wa-ʿāfa minhu*, as possibly in the MS and adopted by Farrāj, who rejects Jawād's reading in a note. That *ṣadūḥ* ("loudly singing") refers to a dove is clear from the following verse; doves are frequently said to be mourning a *hadīl* (variously explained as her dove-chick, or her male partner) in poetry. The verb *ʿāraḍa* does not mean "to oppose" here but "to imitate or emulate".

27 As Farrāj says in a note, this is not wholly clear, and the interpretation of the following verses is also rather unclear. Professor Abeer al-Abbasi (personal communication) believes that *tafrāḥ* means *ḥuzn* ("sadness") here, cf. *mufraḥ*, "oppressed (by debt)", see al-Zabīdī, *Tāj al-ʿarūs*; but the verbal noun should then be *ifrāḥ*, not *tafrāḥ*, which is not attested elsewhere.

[109] She calls a male dove from the top of a thorny tree,[28]
wide-eyed, but her eyes are not wakeful,[29]
She laments because of what she knows, but I do not lament,
and she refuses, always flirtatious …(?)[30]

Admired are these verses by him:[31]

Ask God for fortitude and acknowledge the separation;
perhaps after the parting there will be a meeting!
{45} Ah, would that before the separation or after it
someone had given me to drink the cup of death.

28 *Fī dhurā ʿubriyyatin*; Farrāj glosses *ʿubrī* as "abundant, meaning the tree". I follow al-Zabīdī, *Tāj al-ʿarūs*, which explains *ʿubrī* as "lotus tree (*sidr*) or boxthorn (*awsaj*)", a reference I owe to Abeer al-Abbasi (personal communication).

29 Instead of *bi-ṣawāḥī*, Eghbal suggests reading *bi-ḍawāḥī*.

30 Like Farrāj, I do not understand this hemistich (*wa-abat ʿalā da'bi l-dalāli bi-ṣāḥī*). *Ṣāḥī*, "someone who is sober" does not seem to make sense. *Ṣāḥi* occurs as a shortening of *ṣāḥib*, "friend", but to my knowledge this happens only as a vocative. Assuming that it is used here as a licence for the sake of the rhyme, the sense could be that the dove, despite her flirtatious habit, refuses to take a new friend (Abeer al-Abbasi, personal communication).

31 Abū Tammām, *Waḥshiyyāt*, 188; Ibn Dāwūd, *Zahrah*, 269; al-Zajjājī, *Amālī*, 43–44 (anonymously); Ibn Mayyādah, *Dīwān*, 178.

17 al-ʿUmānī[1]

His name is Muḥammad ibn Dhuʾayb, from the Banū Nahshal ibn Dārim, of the Banū Fuqaym.[2] Abū Mālik ʿUbayd Allāh ibn Muḥammad told me: al-Riyāshī told me; al-Aṣmaʿī said: al-ʿUmānī died at the age of one hundred and thirty;[3] he was not from Oman but he is generally known as "the Omani". That was because Dukayn, the *rajaz* poet,[4] looked at him while he was watering the camels and uttering *rajaz* verse.[5] Seeing that he was yellowish and sickly, he asked, "Who is this Omani?", because of the yellowness of his face. The name stuck.[6]

Al-Riyāshī also said: al-Aṣmaʿī said:[7] al-ʿUmānī entered into the presence of al-Rashīd, in order to recite a poem to him. He was wearing a tall cap and plain shoes. Al-Rashīd said to him, "If you want to recite to me you must wear a large turban and smooth[8] shoes!" ‖ So the poet left him that day. The next morning he [110]
returned to al-Rashīd, dressed like a Bedouin. He recited a poem and kissed the Caliph's hand. "Commander of the Believers," he said, "By God, I have recited a poem to Marwān ibn Muḥammad,[9] I saw him face to face, I kissed his hand,

1 Muḥammad ibn Dhuʾayb ibn Miḥjan, called al-ʿUmānī, "the Omani" (though not from Oman as explained below), was a poet from Basra of mainly *rajaz*. In *Aghānī*, xviii, 311 he is called "a poet of middle rank …, not the equal of contemporaries such as Ashjaʿ, Salm, or Marwān". He died at an advanced age during the reign of Hārūn al-Rashīd. He has entries in Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 755–756; *Aghānī*, xviii, 310–320; al-Marzubānī, *Muwashshaḥ*, 455–456; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, ii, 180; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, iii, 66–67; *GAS*, ii, 464.

2 See Ibn al-Kalbī/Caskel, *Ǧamharat an-nasab*, i, Tab. 60, 62.

3 This is of course an exaggeration, but it is nothing compared with the longevity of many persons mentioned in Abū Ḥātim al-Sijistānī's *al-Muʿammarūn* (*The Long-Lived*) and similar texts.

4 Two poets are known as Dukayn *al-rājiz*, one who died in 105/723 and the other in 109/720, see *GAS*, ii, 372–373.

5 Among the uses of poems in the ancient *rajaz* metre was being "sung at rhythmical activities such as urging camels or drawing water", see *EI2*, viii, 376 (in the entry "radjaz", W. Heinrichs).

6 More explanation is given in *Aghānī*, xviii, 318: a friend, seeing him recovered from an illness (probably jaundice) but still yellowish, compares him to an Omani camel because they used to transport *wars*, a dye-yielding plant (*Memecylon tinctorium*), the powder of which is dark yellow or orange. Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 755, however, explains that he was called Omani because Oman was an unhealthy place (*wabiyyah*) and its people splenetic (*maṭḥūlūn*).

7 Abū Saʿīd ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Qurayb al-Aṣmaʿī (d. c. 213/828) was a very important and often-quoted philologist, a lexicographer, collector of early poetry, and tutor of Abbasid princes. On the following see al-Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān*, i, 95; Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 755–756; idem, *ʿUyūn*, i, 93–94; Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, ii, 139.

8 The adjective *dilqam* (vowels uncertain), as in the text, does not give an acceptable meaning, and I follow *Bayān*, which has *dumāliq*, "smooth and round"; *ʿIqd* has *rāʾiq*, "beautiful".

9 The last Umayyad caliph.

and I took his reward. And before him, to Yazīd ibn al-Walīd and Ibrāhīm ibn al-Walīd.[10] And then to Abū l-ʿAbbās al-Saffāḥ, I composed panegyrics on him, I saw him face to face, I kissed his hand, and I took his reward. Then I composed panegyrics on al-Manṣūr, then on al-Mahdī, then on al-Hādī, and then on many others, caliphs, emirs, notables, and leading persons. But I swear to God, Commander of the Believers, I have never seen anyone who looked more splendid, who had a handsomer face, or who was more generous than you, Commander of the Believers!" Al-Aṣmaʿī continued: The Caliph rewarded him handsomely for the poem and doubled it for his added words. He turned to him, smiling, and being friendly to him, so that all those poets, orators, eloquent men and other visitors who were present wished they were in his place. Then al-ʿUmānī's name flew far and wide.

Ḥayyān ibn ʿAlī al-Baṣrī told me: al-Riyāshī told me, on the authority of al-Aṣmaʿī, who said: Al-ʿUmānī was an ancient poet,[11] proficient, naturally gifted, and bringing profit. (?)[12] He was good at composing both *rajaz* and *qaṣīd* poetry, but he mostly used *rajaz*. He composed some fine horse descriptions, such as the following verses:[13]

> Under his belly there seem to run
> Small white dogs that snap at the abdomen.

Fine is also his poem on al-Mahdī:[14]

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10 Yazīd and his successor Ibrāhīm both reigned briefly in 126/744; the former died in that year and the latter was killed in 132/750, having been replaced by Marwān ibn Muḥammad in 126/744.

11 The text has *shāʿiran qadīman*, which sounds strange because, even though long-lived, he was not a pre- or early Islamic poet, and Farrāj may be right in suggesting reading *qadīran*, "able".

12 *Mufīdan* is again strange; the *Mukhtaṣar* has *muqtadiran*, "capable". Perhaps one could read *mujīdan*, "adept, accomplished".

13 Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥayawān*, ii, 166; Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 756; idem, *Maʿānī*, 79; al-ʿAskarī, *Dīwān al-maʿānī*, ii, 114. As al-Jāḥiẓ says, the verses describe a horse with white fetlocks and he quotes two verses by other poets also fancifully imagining running dogs. I follow Farrāj in reading the last word, with the *Mukhtaṣar*, as *al-qabqabā* ("belly", or perhaps "tummy", since *qabqab* sounds slightly droll), but perhaps the reading of the MS, which has *al-miqnabā* (not *al-manqabā* as Farrāj says) may be accepted: *miqnab* may mean "sack in which a hunter puts the game." The original text may have had *al-manqabā*, as in all other sources, including *Maʿānī*, where it is explained, oddly, as "the place where a vet applies the lancet". These and all the following poems in this section are in *rajaz* metre.

14 Not found in other sources. The MS presents several problems and some emendations and readings given by Eghbal and Farrāj have tacitly been adopted.

Praise be to God, who through praising Him,
Has granted to His servants His servant:
Al-Mahdī, our guide and leader,[15] who with His direction
Now reigns in lowland and highland.
Every free man hopes for his gifts, [111]
A favour that favours him with glory.
O son of one who was unique in his kind,
Confirm for Hārūn the place where he can drink his fill,[16]
At the waterhole where thirst can be quenched with cool water!
O son of your father, you who resemble your grandfather,
His grandfather being known through his grandfather,[17]
Just as one sandal strap is identical to the other sandal strap,
If you give him your support lending him a hand,
You will strengthen your forearm with his,
Now that his lucky stars are on the rise.
Say to the Imam and his designated heir: {46}
You have clothed Mūsā with the caliphal mantle,[18] so clothe Hārūn,
O God's Caliph, with the like of Mūsā's mantle,
And firmly weave together warp and woof,
As is incumbent as his right, and give what is due to him,
And buttress for us the cornerstones of the edifice,[19]
With both his shoulders, defending his counterpart(?),[20]
The bonds of the realm, and its rein,[21]
With shining armour, continually, as rings of his coat of mail:
Good things are unknown as long as you do not make them manifest,

15 *Mahdiyyinā l-hādī*, using al-Mahdī as a name and as a noun.
16 This and the following line use the Bedouin imagery of waterholes. Al-Mahdī had designated his son Mūsā al-Hādī as successor, to be succeeded by his other son Hārūn. There are indications that al-Mahdī had second thoughts about this, intending to favour Hārūn, and it would seem that al-ʿUmānī appeals to the Caliph to do so, but al-Mahdī died before matters were changed.
17 With the profusion of fathers and grandfathers the poet seems to go back to al-ʿAbbās, the eponymous Abbasid ancestor.
18 *Burdahā*, taking *-hā* to refer to the *khilāfah*, "caliphate". The *burdah* could be interpreted figuratively, as "investiture", but it could also refer to the mantle of the Prophet, which was preserved for centuries.
19 The rare word *muṣlakhidd* is typical of *rajaz* style.
20 I do not understand *yadfaʿā ʿan ḍiddihī* (Eghbal's reading of the manuscript's *ṣaddihī*).
21 Reading (with Eghbal) *miqwaddihī* (not *muqwaddihī* as in Farrāj's text) for *miqwadihī*, a poetic licence, again typical of the usage of *rajaz* poets (cf. Ullmann, *Untersuchungen*, 73–76).

Like a sword that you will not know when it is sheathed,
Until one sees drops of blood upon its edge,[22]
Striking with a blow that removes the head of his obstinate adversary.
A sincere counsellor cannot be taxed above his best effort.

Admired is his poem on al-Rashīd:[23]

When the news reached us, like honey
Mixed with the water from a crevice in the rocks,[24]
Brought by the couriers and others,
I said farewell to Hind and Hind's servants,[25]
Having enjoyed a comfortable life of ease,
Amidst beautiful, bashful, virgin women,
[112] And I came from the tribes of Ḥanẓalah and Saʿd,[26]
Crossing vast wastelands with much hardship,
Riding fast, noble Arḥabī camels[27]
Over every height and every vale,
To a man who granted me favours
That made me indebted to him, though I have not paid
Those debts, even though I did my utmost:
Hārūn, O shoot of the branches of glory,
Son of the old men, inheritors of al-Ḥaṭīm,[28]
Who stand up after sleep and pray at night,
Hoping God will grant them the Gardens of Eternity:

22 The MS seems to have *ḥattā yarā naḍāyiran min ḥaddihī*; Farrāj and al-Ṭabbāʿ tacitly adopt Eghbal's suggestion of reading *tarā baṣāʾiran*. For *baṣīrah* meaning "small quantity of blood" see Lane, *Lexicon*.

23 Not found in other sources. Six verses that probably belong to the same poem are in al-Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān*, i, 141–142. Vss. 1 and 23 are identical, or nearly so, with vss. 1 and 3 of a *rajaz* poem with the same rhyme by Abū Nukhaylah on the Umayyad caliph Hishām, *Aghānī*, xx, 394.

24 Adopting Farrāj's suggestion *fī ṣaldī* instead of *ṣalandī*, which is not in the lexicons.

25 Hind is one of the female names often mentioned in traditional Bedouin-style *nasīb*.

26 Not identified with certainty; perhaps Ḥanẓalah ibn Mālik ibn Zayd Manāh and Saʿd ibn Zayd Manāh, tribes of Tamīm, to which the poet's tribe Dārim also belonged.

27 The origin of the epithet is uncertain (see Lane, *Lexicon*, RḤB).

28 Al-Ḥaṭīm is the name of a semi-circular wall near the Kaaba. The tribe of Quraysh were the guardians of the holy sites in Mecca. When the Prophet's grandfather ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib died, his son al-ʿAbbās, eponymous ancestor of the Abbasids, was entrusted with the keeping of the nearby sacred well of Zamzam, "and it remains with the family of al-ʿAbbās to this day" (Ibn Hishām, *Sīrah*, i, 178–179, tr. Guillaume, *The Life of Muhammad*, 79).

You are the one who, at the jostling at the waterhole,
When you fear injustice from men in the throng,
And the treachery of any strong envious one,[29]
You strengthen forearm with forearm,[30]
With an oath of allegiance that cures the burning of the heart.[31]
How cool for those seeking cure in coolness:
You have become the best arm for Islam,
And honey with cream for those who obey!
When you came forward between the remaining soldiers
Among the visitors of God's House—the best visit it is!—
Quraysh, that tribe of pure lineage, said,
"Wealth has come!" and they were confident of support
From a king whose boons never stint:
He gives in abundance and keeps his promise.
His nature,[32] clad in his mantle,
Among the older and younger men of Hāshim,
Was like a full moon that appears among lucky stars.

Among his admired and choice verses are also the following:[33]

A wheeler-dealer[34] living in luxury,
Possessing singing-girls and a donkey
With docked tail, docked by the vet, [113]
Such as merchants go round with on the market,

29 Vss. 19–20 are particularly unclear in the MS, which reads *lammā ḥ.sh.t n.ʿ.y* … (for which I follow the suggestion of Muṣṭafā Jawād adopted by Eghbal and Farrāj: *lammā khashīta baghya*) and *wa-n.k.t k.l* …, which I prefer to read as *wa-naktha kulli* rather than Farrāj's *wa-kidta kulla*.

30 The verse is nearly identical with vs. 15 of the preceding poem.

31 Literally, "of the liver". The oath of allegiance (*bayʿah*) could refer to the oath taken on Hārūn's accession; but the "strengthening of forearm with forearm" suggests that the poem was composed after Hārūn's decision to appoint his son Muḥammad al-Amīn as heir apparent, to be succeeded by his son ʿAbd Allāh al-Maʾmūn. The ill-fated covenant was solemnly proclaimed in 186/802 at the Kaaba in Mecca (cf. vs. 27, where "God's House" is the Kaaba). See also al-ʿUmānī's longer *rajaz* poem (74 lines) addressing al-Rashīd about the *bayʿah* to Muḥammad al-Amīn, *Aghānī*, xviii, 312–314.

32 The MS has *s.m.y.t.h*, for which Eghbal suggest *samiyyuhū* (but "his namesake" does not seem to fit) and which Farrāj reads as *sīmatuhū* (claiming that it means *hayʾatuhū*, "his appearance"). I read it tentatively as *shīmatuhū*.

33 The poem has not been found elsewhere.

34 *Bundār* (Persian): someone who hoards wares to sell at a profit.

Is not the same as an Arab, his cloak in tatters,
Always stumbling[35] on the roads,
His toenails having fallen off,
Seeking refuge in a stronghold stiflingly hot,
Crooked,[36] its wall slanting,
In which there is neither dirham nor dinar,
{47} Where mice eat skinny mice,
In a land where the dust rises high,
Where a middle-aged man has no dignity,
Like devils when they are aroused,[37]
They have jugs and jars,
And snacks[38] that smell.
When he is in luck his neighbour does not desire him.

Considered fine are the following verses by him:[39]

There's many an old man with sweaty brow,
Arriving, with others, in Baghdad in the morning,
With what looks like flour on his cheeks,
Having no part in worldly matters nor religion,[40]
Standing with others who stand
At the door of a big-bellied fat cat,
Wearing a Qūhī robe[41] and another soft robe,

35 I follow Farrāj in reading *al-ʿithār* instead of *al-ghubār* ("dust"), because the latter is found in vs. 12 and a repetition of the rhyme-word is unlikely.

36 *Aḥdab* could mean "hunchbacked", but judging by the context it refers not the man but to his dwelling.

37 Reading *idhā tuthāru* as suggested by Farrāj, for *idhā -stathārū* (Eghbal) or *idhā -stashārū* (MS); but the interpretation is not clear to me. Perhaps something is missing.

38 MS: *fāshfārāt*, the plural of *fāsh-fārah*, variant of *fīsh-fāraj*, from Persian *pēsh-pārag*, "hors d'oeuvre, appetiser"; cf. al-Jawālīqī, *Muʿarrab*, 467: *al-fayshafāraj* (…) *mā yuqaddamu bayna yaday al-ṭaʿām min al-atʿimah al-mushahhiyah*. One also finds curtailed forms: *shufārij* (Lane, *Lexicon*, *ShFRJ*), *shafāriq* (al-Jāḥiẓ, *Bukhalāʾ*, 179), *shabāriq* (al-Sijistānī, *Muʿammarūn*, 57), *shufāraj* and *bishbāraj* (both in Ibn al-Sikkīt, *Iṣlāḥ al-manṭiq*, 167). See also vs. 9 of the following poem.

39 Not found in other sources.

40 The syntax and interpretation of *wa-laysa fī dunyā wa-lā li-dīnī* are not clear to me.

41 The adjective Qūhī refers to Qūhistān, or Quhistān, from Persian Kūhistān ("Mountain-land"), the name of a region in present-day Iran and Afghanistan, see *EI2*, v, 354–356, "Ḳūhistān" (J.H. Kramers). Dozy, *Supplément*, s.v., says of *qūhī* that "cette étoffe est de peu valeur", but the sources contradict this; see e.g. al-Thaʿālibī, *Ẓarāʾif*, 112 ("If you like to be

When he invites guests to partake of a fat camel,[42]
And snacks with *ṭurdīn*,[43]
His hands uncovered, with a fork,[44]
Not caring about the poor man's need.

He composed many fine poems. He was deemed to be the equal of al-ʿAjjāj and Ru'bah;[45] but he was in fact a more natural poet ‖ than those two. He was their [114]
contemporary, of the same age and time, and also of al-Dukayn and Abū l-Najm al-ʿIjlī,[46] but he lived until the time of al-Rashīd, having made panegyric poetry on al-Ḥajjāj ibn Yūsuf.[47]

fortunate / and to dress yourself in silk // From Qūhistān …") or Bashshār ibn Burd, *Dīwān*, iii, 205 ("… While you are amusing yourself / in Qūhī silk and perfume").

42 Eghbal suggests reading *daʿā bi-ḥamalin* ("called for a lamb") instead of *daʿā li-jamalin*, perhaps because a lamb fits better in an urban context than a camel.

43 Farrāj tacitly adopts Eghbal's emendation *al-ṭurdīn* instead of *al-ṭarīn* as in the MS. Al-ʿUmānī mentions *ṭurdīn* also in his gastronomic poem in *Aghānī*, xviii, 317, where it is editorially glossed as "a Kurdish dish", following al-Zabīdī, *Tāj* (ṬRD); Abān al-Lāḥiqī mentions it in a verse quoted in al-Ṣūlī, *Awrāq*, i, 30, where the editor explains it as "a Turkish dish"; Kushājim mentions it in a poem (al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, v, 251, Kushājim, *Dīwān*, 463).

44 Instead of *fāriḥīn* read, following Eghbal, *fārajīn*, from Persian (*pāra-chīn*, "piece-pick"); cf. al-Jāḥiẓ, *Bukhalāʾ*, 68 on Persians eating with *bārajīn* (Serjeant's translation, 56 has "skewer", connecting it instead with Persian *barchī*, "a small spear").

45 See above, p. 43.

46 On Abū l-Najm al-ʿIjlī (d. before 125/743) see GAS, ii. 371–372.

47 Al-Ḥajjāj died in 95/714.

18 al-Ḥusayn ibn Muṭayr[1]

ʿAbd Allāh ibn Muḥammad al-Khazarī told me: al-Tawwazī told me: I asked Abū ʿUbaydah, "What do you think of the poetry of al-Ḥusayn ibn Muṭayr?" He answered, "One keeps hearing one thing after the other of his verse, and I much admire his many original motifs. If you happen to meet him, tell him that I find his poetry most admirable."[2]

Among his poetry is the following:[3]

It is, Sulaymā, as if we never briefly visited you,
riding strong, stubborn ʿAlasī she-camels,[4]
And never addressed you, amidst the enviers that were present;
—in speaking of one's needs there is some anxiety—(?)[5]
And as if we did not say, the day your camels went with a quick pace,
and the sturdy camel was … (?) from dragging the wooden …(?),[6]
"May God bless with rain neighbours of ours who departed!",
when a blasting wind approached the meadows on the hard ground.
I did not fear separation from them until they came in groups in the morning
and the long-necked noble camels had taken their loads.
Then, behind them, the camel driver urged them on, chanting,
and side-boards were put to the howdajes, hiding those you love.[7]

1 Al-Ḥusayn ibn Muṭayr al-Asadī (d. 170/786 or some years before), a *mawlā* affiliated to the tribe of Asad, a poet of panegyrics to Umayyads and Abbasids. He adopted a Bedouin style both in his dress and his poetry (*Aghānī*, xvi, 17). He has entries in *Aghānī*, xvi, 16–26; al-Marzubānī, *Muwashshaḥ*, 360 (listed among the *Islāmiyyūn*, not the *muḥdathūn*); Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh*, xiv, 330–335; Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, x, 166–178; Ibn Shākir, *Fawāt*, i, 388–389; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xiii, 63–66; Ibn Faḍl Allāh, *Masālik* (ed. al-Jubūrī), xiv, 335–336; GAS, ii, 448, ix 287. His poetry has been collected by Ḥusayn ʿAṭwān in al-Ḥusayn ibn Muṭayr, *Shiʿr*.

2 For a different, but equally positive, version of Abū ʿUbaydah's reply to al-Tawwazī, see below, p. 171 note 26.

3 Al-Ḥusayn ibn Muṭayr, *Shiʿr*, 145–148 (with an additional verse between vss. 9 and 10 and another between vss. 15 and 16). Vss. 12–13, 16–17, 14–15 are in Saʿīd al-Rabaʿī, *Fuṣūṣ*, iv, 235–236, followed by four additional verses.

4 Following Farrāj in reading *ʿAlasiyyāt*; camels called after the tribe of ʿAlas, of the Banū Saʿd; the adjective ʿAlasī, said of a man or a camel, means "strong" (Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān*, *ʿLS*). The MS has *ʿAnbasiyyāt*, which does not yield a camel-related sense.

5 Eghbal and Farrāj suggest reading *takhlīj* for *taḥlīj*. My rendering of the former is very tentative.

6 I do not understand *wa-l-dawsariyyu bi-jadhbi l-sāji majrūjū* (or *maḥrūjū*, suggested by Farrāj).

7 Instead of *juddidat* I follow Farrāj's suggestion, reading *khuddidat* (*khadd*: "plank of the

Those are your dwellings in al-Quff,[8] now obliterated, [115]
while summer's dust clouds and violent storms have raged over them,
Deserted, devoid of dwellings, with only
gazelles and croaking crows remaining there.
There are stakes and other traces on what was the yard,
and something standing up in that abode, slender, its head
wounded.[9]
It was the dwelling of a white woman living in luxury, wearing
a robe made of striped Yemen cloth and a mantle of variegated fabric.
A well there is, with brackish water, the drinking-places choked with
soil,
mixed with the spittle of locusts' nymphs.[10]
Salmah[11] visited you on a dark night,
when the eyes were asleep and the spirit was raised.[12]
Welcome, this apparition that briefly stayed with us!
And, Salm, there is nothing wrong if I greet you.[13]
Will you be brought to Salmā and her neighbours {48}
by bulky, youthful, Arḥabī she-camels,
Loose-lipped, strong-legged,
long-limbed, swift-legged, fast?
She said, "You no longer love me!"; I replied,
"No! I swear, Salm, by Him whose House is sought by pilgrims,
Whatever I may forget, I shall never forget a glance from you,
once, on a feast day (people go out on a feast day)!"

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howdaj", Lane, *Lexicon*, *KhDD*). Alternatively, one could read *khuddirat* ("were curtained"), as in Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, s.v. Ḍabbā', where this and an additional verse are quoted.

8 Farrāj and ʿAṭwān vowel it as *al-qaff*, and the latter glosses it as "rough high ground"; I prefer to take it as a place name, see Abū ʿUbayd al-Bakrī, *Muʿjam*, 1087.

9 The word *māthil*, confusingly, may mean "standing up" as well as "lying on the earth". The poet means a tent-pin, its head battered, cf. *Lisān al-ʿArāb* (*ShJJ*): *al-shajīj wa-l-mushajjaj: al-watid … wa-watid mashjūj …*

10 I follow Farrāj (*mamjūj*) rather than the MS and ʿAṭwān (*maljūj*) or Eghbal (suggesting *malḥūj*).

11 It is Shahmah in Ṣāʿid al-Rabaʿī, *Fuṣūṣ*, iv, 235 and Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān* (*ShHM*), where this verse is quoted. The woman's name appears variously in the poem as Sulaymā (vs. 1). Salmah, Salm (vss. 13, 16) and Salmā (vs. 14).

12 *Al-rūḥu maʿrūjū*, a licence for *maʿrūjun bihī* (Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān*, *ʿRJ*, quoting part of this verse). As the following verse shows, the poet, asleep, is visited by a phantom of the beloved.

13 I follow the *Mukhtaṣar*, which has *fī l-taslīmi* instead of *bī fī l-s.lmi*, which is not clear. ʿAṭwān suggests reading *fī l-nawmi*. *Fuṣuṣ* has *fī l-tarḥībi*, "in welcoming you".

This, as you see, is poetry like brocade, or rather like strung pearls. with its fine descriptions and neat arrangement. He also said,[14]

Grey hair descended and does not want to leave;
youth has done its business and has gone.
Do not go far away,[15] dark night of delight
and of opulence, that makes the sick healthy!
I never sold it for anything that could be bought,
even if I could have made a profit.
[116] So farewell to youth, from a visitor
in the morning, who comes at night and at dawn.
And welcome to the descending grey hair, now that it wants to stay,
intent on virtue and probity.[16]
Let youth go: it has gone on its way;
and let your eyes watch a cloud that flashed with lightning.
The east wind drives it steadily, as a gazelle fawn is driven,
from Laʿlaʿ[17] until it lit up and shone,
A black-and-white cloud; it disobeyed the wind on the hillocks,
kneeling above them and holding on,
Then above Kuḥayl of the Banū Qanān,[18] on the summits,
dark, blackish, aiming for the plains.
There seem to be sounds of pilgrims in the evening,
who, with raised voice, seek salvation,
In that cloud; or the sounds of she-camels that were separated
from their calves and still persist in the evening.[19]
It sends to the wild animals in the evening a stream of its water,
as if from wineskins, filled with wind.

14 Not found elsewhere.

15 A formula often found in ancient elegies, addressing the deceased.

16 *Murūʾatan wa-ṣalāḥā*; the former originally meant "manliness, manly qualities", but in Islamic times the sense shifted to "virtue". Grey hair as associated with virtue and wisdom is a common topos in poetry.

17 The name of a place or a mountain, see Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-buldān* (locating it between Basra and Kufa), *WKAS*, *Lām*, 779a.

18 Al-Kuḥayl is mentioned by Yāqūt as being in the territory of Hudhayl; Ibn al-Kalbī/Caskel, *Ǧamharat an-nasab*, ii, 465 lists two tribes called Qanān, neither belonging to Hudhayl.

19 Instead of *fa-lajajna baʿdu rawāḥā* Farrāj offers an alternative reading that is closer to the MS, *fa-laḥijna baʿdu razāḥā* ("but became stuck, struck with fatigue").

You may see the ranks of wild beasts at its edges,
like Thamūd, the day the weaned camel calf brayed, crying out.[20]
And when its downpour moved over Yathrib, it looked
like a town whose people called for help from Bayāḥ (?)[21]

Admired is also the poem in which he says,[22]

I used to be strong, before passion lit
on my liver[23] a fire that is tardy in abating.
If the fire of passion were left alone it would dwindle,[24]
but yearning, every day, fuels it.
Passion's early spring rains, fixed in the heart's core and the bowels,
are watered with yearning by the late spring, increasing them.[25]
I wished my ardent love would die
with the progress of days and times,
For her with the quivering haunches and slender waist,
with sweet teeth and thin gums,
Her collarbones yellow, her palms red,[26] [117]
her locks black, her cheeks white.

20 An allusion to the story, told in the Qur'an, of the Arabian people of Thamūd, who, disobeying Ṣāliḥ, the prophet sent to them, slaughtered a miraculously produced she-camel (Q al-Shuʿarāʾ 26:141–158; al-Qamar 54:23–29; 91 al-Shams 11–14). God destroyed them.

21 Yathrib was the old name of Medina. The last word of the verse could be read, for instance, as *li-Bayāḥā* or *li-Yabāḥā*, as if referring to a pagan idol called Bayāḥ or Yabāḥ; but these are not recorded anywhere (see ʿAṭwān's note). For *taghawwata*, as in the MS and the edition, I read *taghawwatha* ("called for help"); Farrāj suggest reading *taʿawwatha*, "were perplexed".

22 Al-Ḥusayn ibn Muṭayr, *Shiʿr*, 157–158, with some additional verses; see also Abū Tammām's *Ḥamāsah* (al-Marzūqī, *Sharḥ*, 1228–1230, vss. 1, 4, 3, 6, 9,7 and see 1360 for two more verses from the same poem, also quoted by Ibn al-Muʿtazz, below); Ibn al-Muʿtazz, *Badīʿ*, 39 (vs. 9, as an example of *muṭābaqah*, antithesis) *Aghānī*, xvi, 34; al-Zajjājī, *Amālī*, 192–193; al-Qālī, *Amālī*, i, 165; al-Murtaḍā, *Amālī*, i, 434–435; Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, x, 176–177; al-Baṣrī, *Ḥamāsah*, ii, 191–193; al-Baghdādī, *Khizānah*, v, 470–475 and many other sources.

23 *Kabidī*; on "liver" being an Arabic poetical equivalent of "heart", see above, p. 165 and below, pp. 208, 248, 613.

24 The MS and almost all editions have *taḍarramat*, "is ablaze", which seemingly fits, but it contradicts what follows, and I prefer reading *taṣarramat*, as in Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, x, 176 and *al-Ḥamāsah al-Baṣriyyah*, ii, 192.

25 See e.g. al-Marzūqī, *Sharḥ*, 1229–1230 and al-Baghdādī, *Khizānah*, v, 471–472 on this complex image that combines water and fire.

26 She has used a saffron-based perfume and her hands are adorned with henna. This verse and the last verse of this quotation are admired by Abū ʿUbaydah: "I wish all poets approached this!" (*Aghānī*, xvi, 25).

They[27] make us desire, so that our hearts shudder
as the chamomile shudders under the dew falling on it.
Among them is one with loose sash,[28] resembling
an oryx cow in Sarrān,[29] tall-bodied,
With shapely limbs,[30] one who adorns her necklaces
with her beauty, more than her necklaces adorn her.

Admired is also the following:[31]

{49} My two friends of ʿAmr, stop, and you'll recognise
an abode of Suhmah, between Līnah and al-Ḥabl.[32]
Among the women there was one with two loose sashes, a young girl,
with shapely extremities, plump arms and legs,
Chaste, of two colours: black and fair,
and of two physiques, some parts delicate, others bulky.[33]
Her face is white, of bright radiance,
topped by locks that are black, branch and root.[34]
How strange it is with me, loving the one who kills me!
It is as if I requite being killed with affection.
Among the clear signs[35] of love is that her people
are dearer to my heart and eyes than my own people.

27 A shift from feminine singular to feminine plural.

28 Meaning that she has a slender waist.

29 Sarrān has not been found elsewhere; it is probably a misreading of Turbān, found in other sources, said to be a place not far from Medina.

30 Instead of *aṭrāf*, Ibn al-Muʿtazz, *Badīʿ*, 39 has *ardāf*, "buttocks, haunches"; similarly in vs. 2 of the next poem.

31 Al-Ḥusayn ibn Muṭayr, *Shiʿr*, 181–182, with additional verses. Vss. 5–6 are in a piece of four verses in Abū Tammām's *Ḥamāsah* (al-Marzūqī, *Sharḥ*, 1252–1253) and other sources, such as al-Qālī, *Amālī*, i, 155.

32 ʿAmr is an unidentified clan or tribe. Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, s.v. al-Ḥabl, quotes this and two following verses (omitted by Ibn al-Muʿtazz), without further information on the place names.

33 *Min laṭīfin wa-min ʿaslī* does not make sense to me and Farrāj's explanation of *ʿasl* ("quivering, or mixed with honey") does not convince me. I have assumed the last word is a corruption of *ʿablī*, which gives a good antithesis, after the preceding antithesis.

34 The arboreal metaphor for women's hair is common.

35 Reading *bayyināt*, with *Ḥamāsah* and *Amālī*, which looks more plausible than *ghunayāt/ghinayāt* (Farrāj).

Among the widely known and transmitted verses by Ibn Muṭayr are the following, with a description of clouds and rain—he was one of the most skilled poets on this topic:[36]

Its teats have multiplied for a multitude of drops:
when the cloud is milked its teats pour forth.
Like the belly of its udder, in the belly of which
is the belly of the sky, huge, hollow.[37]
Its lightning is like a fire that is met by a wind, [118]
together with *ʿarfaj* and *alāʾ*.[38]
It evokes laughter with its flashes, shedding tears
from eyes that did not water on account of motes,[39]
Without sadness, without joy,
it laughs and weeps in turn.
If its waters had been taken from the beaches' waves,
no water would have been left of the beaches' waves.[40]

The occasion for composing this poem was that Ibn Muṭayr visited a governor of Medina, who had been told that he was an excellent poet and who wanted to find this out for himself. He said, "A dark cloud has risen, Ibn Muṭayr! Say something on it, it has opened its spouts!" Then Ibn Muṭayr composed the poem of which I have quoted these verses.[41]

Choice verses by him are these:[42]

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36 One notes that the poet's father was called Muṭayr, "Little Rain". Al-Ḥusayn ibn Muṭayr, *Shiʿr*, 133–136, 16 verses, of which Ibn al-Muʿtazz quotes 1–2, 4, 6–7. See also Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 91–92 (and with French translation by Gaudefroy-Demombynes in Ibn Qotaïba, *Introduction*, 26–27), where 15 verses are quoted, similarly ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, iii, 465–466. Parts of the poem are often quoted, see e.g. Abū Tammām, *Waḥshiyyāt*, 280; al-Qālī, *Amālī*, i, 177 (5 vss.); *Aghānī*, xvii, 25–26 (5 vss.); al-ʿAskarī, *Dīwān al-maʿānī*, ii, 6.

37 *Jawf*, "cavity, inside, belly" occurs three times, plus the adjective *jawfāʾ*, "hollow".

38 *ʿArfaj* (*Rhanterium epapposum*) and *alāʾ* (unidentified, an evergreen bitter-tasting plant that grows in sand, see al-Zabīdī, *Tāj*, ʾLW) are highly inflammable plants.

39 I follow the version in the other sources (*mustaḍḥikun bi-lawāmiʿin mustaʿbirun | bi-madāmiʿin lam tumrihā l-aqdhāʾū*), instead of the garbled word order in the text.

40 Al-ʿAskarī (*Dīwān al-maʿānī*, ii, 6–7) says that this verse was used by theologians to refute the claims of the philosophers who said that rain was caused by vapours rising from the sea; cf. also al-Ṣafadī, *Nuṣrat al-thāʾir*, 254.

41 In the slightly different version of this anecdote in Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 90–71 and Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, iii, 465–466, Ibn Muṭayr composes his poem having observed the rainstorm from a height.

42 Al-Ḥusayn ibn Muṭayr, *Shiʿr*, 143. The verses are ascribed to Qays ibn Dharīḥ in Ibn

My two friends, this is my sigh today, now gone;
who helps me tomorrow with a sigh that approaches with its shadow?[43]
Some sighs would kill me if they aimed to do so,
those that come following[44] those that have gone.

Admired are also these verses:[45]

I used to guard my eyes against drinking from the well of weeping,
but they arrived at what I guarded them against.
My two friends, one cannot reproach life, if only
we found someone to bring back the days of youth!

He was one of the well-known, proficient and prolific poets. What we have quoted about him should be sufficient indication of his style in the rest.

Ṭabāṭabā, *ʿIyār*, 137. Vs. 1 is ascribed to Majnūn Laylā (Qays ibn al-Mulawwaḥ), *Dīwān*, 59, and vs. 2 is in a poem by a Bedouin quoted by Isḥāq ibn Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī in *Aghānī*, v, 359, but ascribed by some to Kuthayyir (and found in Kuthayyir's *Dīwān*, 100). Both verses are quoted anonymously in al-Qālī, *Amālī*, ii, 286, Ibn al-Anbārī, *al-Mudhakkar wa-l-muʾannath*, i, 206.

43 I have assumed that the version of Farrāj and Ibn Muṭayr, *Shiʿr* (*fa-mā baʿda Mayyin zafratun qad uṭillatī*) is a corruption of the text in al-*Mudhakkar wa-l-muʾannath* and *Dīwān Majnūn Laylā*: *fa-man li-ghadin min zafratin qad aẓallatī* (the same but with *aṭallatī* in *Amālī*). I am uncertain about how to read and translate the last word. *ʿIyār* has *fa-man lī bi-ukhrā mithlihā qad aṭallatī*, *Aghānī* has *fa-man lī bi-ukhrā fī ghadin qad aẓallatī*.

44 Reading *taquṣṣū*, as suggested by Farrāj in a note, instead of *taquḍḍu* as in his edition; the MS seems to have *tuqaḍḍī*.

45 Apparently from the same poem of which nine verses were quoted above (pp. 171–172), see Ibn Muṭayr, *Shiʿr*, 159 (vss. 14–15 of a poem of 17 verses); also in Abū Tammām's *Ḥamāsah* (al-Marzūqī, *Sharḥ*, 1360) and several later sources, such as al-Murtaḍā, *Amālī*, i, 435, Ibn Ḥamdūn, *Tadhkirah*, vi, 166.

19 Ibn Munādhir[1] [119]

Abū l-Aswad Muḥammad ibn al-Faḍl told me: Isḥāq ibn ʿAmr al-ʿAdawī told me: Muḥammad ibn Munādhir was from Aden. He moved to Basra on account of the many scholars and literate people who lived there. He associated himself with specialists in Islamic jurisprudence, Hadith, and literature (*adab*), until he had reached a very high level of competence in these disciplines. He was a man of decent, pious, and gentle comportment, and of dignified bearing, until he came into disrepute for his affair with ʿAbd al-Majīd ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Thaqafī.[2] He went to Mecca after the death of ʿAbd al-Majīd and he stayed there.

Isḥāq said: al-Ḥajjāj the wool merchant told me:[3] "I left for Mecca, having lived near Ibn Munādhir in Basra. We were good friends. When I arrived in ‖ {50}
Mecca I asked after him and I was told he was in the Holy Mosque. I went to him and found around him some scholars of poetry, history, grammar, and lexicography, who were taking notes from his dictation. I expected that he would be glad to meet me again as much as I was longing to see him, and that he would come and embrace me as soon as he had recognised me. But he raised his head, looked at me, and turned again to the others, addressing them without paying attention to me. I said to myself, perhaps he has not recognised me! But then came Abū l-Ṣalt,[4] who had been a friend of both of us, and when Ibn Munādhir

1 Muḥammad ibn Munādhir (d. 198/814), a *mawlā* from Aden who was active in Baghdad and Basra. Turning from frivolity to religion in later life is a common topos, but Ibn Munādhir, having been pious and respectable, turned to libertinage and the composition of some outrageous invective, on account of which he had to flee; he died in Mecca. Compared with *Aghānī* (see e.g. xviii, 194–195) the lampoons quoted by Ibn al-Muʿtazz are rather mild. He has entries in Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 869–871; al-Mubarrad, *Kāmil*, iii, 255–258; *Aghānī*, xviii, 168–210; al-Marzubānī, *Muwashshaḥ*, 453–454; Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, xix, 55–65; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, v, 63–64. See GAS, ii, 505–506; EI2, iii, 890, "Ibn Munādhir" (Ch. Pellat); EAL, 351 (P.F. Kennedy).

2 Little is known about this ʿAbd al-Majīd, apart from that he died falling from a roof (*Aghānī*, xviii, 178) and that he had a brother, Abū l-Ṣalt Muḥammad, who is called a poet below (p. 376).

3 Perhaps he is (al-)Ḥajjāj ibn Abī ʿUthmān al-Ṣawwāf (the wool merchant) al-Baṣrī (d. 143/760–761), a transmitter of Hadith, see al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xi, 316. In a different version of the anecdote in *Aghānī*, xviii, 193–194 he is called Ḥajjāj al-Ṣawwāf al-Aʿwar (the one-eyed). On Ibn Munādhir's praise of the language of the Meccans as compared with that of the Basrans, see al-Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān*, i, 18–19.

4 Abū l-Ṣalt Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb was the brother of ʿAbd al-Majīd, Ibn Munādhir's friend.

saw him he turned to me and said to me, 'Do you know this man?' I said, 'Yes: this is the one on whom someone—may God cut off his tongue!—has said:[5]

If ever you tie yourself
to a rope from Abū l-Ṣalt and depend on him,
You will depend on a rope
with frayed strands, soon severed.
[120] So take some oleander leaves
and take some *qatt* leaves,[6]
And take some curly hair of Ghaylān[7]
and take the nails of Subbukht.'[8]

Ibn Munādhir turned [to me][9] for a moment, then he turned to the others for a while. Then he raised his head to me, saying, 'Where are you from?' 'From

5 The following verses are vss. 1–2 and 17–18 of an invective poem by Ibn Munādhir on Abū l-Ṣalt, in *Aghānī*, xviii, 188–189 (vss. 1–2 also p. 194). See also al-Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān*, ii, 214, Thaʿlab, *Majālis*, ii, 355–356.

6 Oleander (*diflā*) is very poisonous. *Qatt* is a plant used as fodder; see al-Zabīdī, *Tāj* (QTT), Lane, *Lexicon*: "a certain food, or fodder … a species of trefoil, or clover … A certain wild grain, not raised by man; which the people of the desert, on the occasion of a year of drought, when they are destitute of milk and dates and the like for their food, bruise and grind; being content therewith notwithstanding its coarseness."

7 Ghaylān, not identified, may be a corruption of Kaysān, as in the parallel sources. Instead of *jaʿd Ghaylān*, *Bayān* has *shiʿr Kaysān*, "Kaysān's poetry" (but more likely is *shaʿr Kaysān*, "Kaysān's hair"); Thaʿlab, *Majālis* has *salḥ Kaysān* ("Kaysān's shit"), *Aghānī* has *jaʿr Kaysān* ("Kaysān's dung"). Kaysān is identified by the editor of *Bayān* and *Majālis* as the grammarian Abū Sulaymān Kaysān ibn al-Muʿarraf, a contemporary of Abū ʿUbaydah. Instead of Ghaylān one could also read *ghīlān*, "ghouls", but a personal name seems more likely in view of the context and the parallels.

8 I prefer to follow most parallel sources, reading Subbukht instead of Nissakht, as in Farrāj's text. His note explains this as "a Jewish name, given to Abū ʿUbaydah, alluding to his allegedly Jewish grandfather; Abū ʿUbaydah was dirty and had long nails." Eghbal (Notes et variantes, 14), following a suggestion of P. Kraus, reads it as *nishkhatt*, "בּוֹשְׁחַת = pourri, saligaud" (but I cannot make sense of the Hebrew word, which seems to read *bošḥat* but is probably a corruption of *nišḥat*). *Bayān* and *Majālis* read it as *Subbukht*, which is also suggested by the manuscript of Ibn al-Muʿtazz's *Ṭabaqāt*. Thaʿlab explains Subbukht as "a nickname of Abū ʿUbaydah"; cf. Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, i, 150, al-Qiftī, *Inbāh*, iii, 285 (and see also the lexica such as Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿArab*, *SBKhT*). A Persian derivation (Sībukht / Sebokht, Triply Fortunate) was proposed by Michael Lecker, "Biographical Notes on Abū ʿUbayda", 73; Reinhard Weipert (*EI3*, "Abū ʿUbayda") explains it as Persian *sībukht*, "small apple", which I cannot find confirmed elsewhere.

9 The parenthesis is added by me, as the context seems to require it.

Basra', I replied. 'Where do you live?' 'In the neighbourhood of the Banū ʿĀyish, at a place called al-Ṣawwāfūn.'[10] 'So do you know that whoreson called al-Ḥajjāj the wool merchant?' I replied, 'Sure, when I left him he was fucking Ibn Munādhir's mother.' Ibn Munādhir laughed; then he stood up and embraced me."

Al-ʿArūḍī told me: Abū Isḥāq told me: al-ʿUtbī said,[11] "I saw Ibn Munādhir in Mecca at the time of the pilgrimage, calling out at the top of his voice, 'People! MAnādhir is a village, I am Ibn MUnādhir!' "

Muḥammad ibn Yazīd told me: Muḥammad ibn ʿĀmir al-Ḥanafī told me: Ibn Munādhir was a *mawlā* of the Banū Yarbūʿ. At first he was respectable, until he became attached to ʿAbd al-Majīd al-Thaqafī and he lost all respectability. When ʿAbd al-Majīd had died he left for Mecca, where he stayed. He would be at the sessions of Sufyān ibn ʿUyaynah,[12] who would ask him about obscure words and their meanings in hadiths, and Ibn Munādhir would answer his queries.

[In a panegyric on Hārūn,] Ibn Munādhir says:[13] [121]

Have you, people, permission from al-Ḥasan
al-Baṣrī regarding passionate love, or from Ibn Sīrīn?[14]
It is foolish for venerable greybeards
still to be infatuated.
I have put on the robe of youthful love and its brightness,
though sixty years of my age have passed.
When we saw Hārūn, night turned for us
into day, with Hārūn's light.
If we asked the clouds to rain for the sake of
your handsome face, O Hārūn, we would have rain!

10 "The neighbourhood of the Banū ʿĀyish" (*nāḥiyat Banī ʿĀyish*) has not been identified. Perhaps they are Banū ʿĀ'ish ibn Mālik, a branch of Taym Allāh ibn Thaʿlabah. The narrator, a wool merchant (*ṣawwāf*) lived at Woolmarket (al-Ṣawwāfūn).

11 Al-ʿUtbī has an entry below, § 66. For the following, see *Aghānī*, xviii, 170: Ibn Munādhir, when wrongly called Ibn Manādhir, would ask mockingly, "Manādhir Minor or Manādhir Major?", alluding to two villages in al-Ahwāz.

12 Sufyān ibn ʿUyaynah (d. 196/811 in Mecca), a famous transmitter of Hadith. For the following, see also *Aghānī*, xviii, 170.

13 Vss. 1–3, 5 in al-Mubarrad, *Rawḍah*, 184, vss. 1–3 in Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 869. The parenthesis (*fī madḥ Hārūn*) is given by Farrāj instead of "on the death of Sufyān (*fī mawt Sufyān*)" as in the MS, an obvious error. For the following verses see also Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 869 and *Aghānī*, xviii, 184 and 192–193 (illustrating that Ibn Munādhir included "libertine" themes even in the introduction of an ode on a caliph).

14 Ḥasan al-Baṣri, a famous preacher from Basra, and his friend Ibn Sīrīn, mostly famous as a dream interpreter and transmitter of Hadith; both died in 110/728.

He also said in a poem:[15]

Hey, moon of the mosque!
Have you anything to give me?
My cure must come from you, if only
you allowed me to smell and kiss you!
Every heart has found consolation,
but my heart is preoccupied with you;
I have been burdened with loving you,
with what could not be carried by an elephant.

At the end of this poem he says:[16]

The metre of this poem is,
to those of understanding:
Tedum dumdum tedum dumdum
tedum tedum tedumdum.

In a lampoon on Khālid ibn Ṭalīq, chief cadi of Basra, who made many mistakes, Ibn Munādhir said,[17]

Say to the Commander of Believers, who is
descended from Hāshim, in its essence and core:
[122] If you, being angry, punish us
with Khālid, it is the worst of punishments.
{51} In the past people's judges were
part of God's mercy; this one is torment.

15 Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 870–871, *Aghānī*, xviii, 193 (without the sequel of two verses).

16 He is mocking the prosodists (see his altercation with al-Khalīl ibn Aḥmad, who discovered the system of Arabic poetic metres, in *Aghānī*, xviii, 184), using the customary dummy words to describe the various metres (here *al-hazaj*): *Mafāʿīlun mafāʿīlun | mafāʿīlun mafāʿīlū*, or more precisely SLLX SLLX | SLLX SLLL (S = short syllable, L = long syllable, X = either short or long; Arabic prosodic notation has no equivalent of X). See van Gelder, *Sound and Sense*, 23, 60. In *Aghānī*, xviii, 187–188 it is related that Ibn Munādhir was seen with a book on metrics, with its circular diagrams. Someone, thinking it was a magical or esoteric work, accused him of being a heretic.

17 Abū l-Haytham Khālid ibn Ṭalīq ibn Muḥammad al-Khuzāʿī was cadi of Basra during al-Mahdī's reign. Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, i, 298 describes him as conceited and haughty. For the following two epigrams and some other poems on Khālid by Ibn Munādhir, see al-Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān*, ii, 345–346 (in the section "Stories about stupid people", *aḥādīth al-nawkā*), Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 869–870, idem, *ʿUyūn*, i, 63–64, and *Aghānī*, xviii, 199, 204.

I wonder about Khālid: how is it that he never
errs among us being right?

He also said on him:

People, help! The judge
of the clan of Ṭalīq
Has been made a laughingstock,
acting as judge with the views of the Katholikos![18]
What kind of judge are you,
violating[19] and annulling rights?
Abū l-Haytham, you are
not fit for the job,
O no, and you're incapable
of carrying its burdens.

On everyone's tongue is his elegy on ʿAbd al-Majīd, which is mentioned among the fine, extended elegies.[20] It is noble, well-made, and very eloquent. He composed it in emulation of a poem by Abū Zubayd al-Ṭāʾī.[21] It is related[22] that he said to Abū ʿUbaydah: "Give your judgement on the two poems, but take care and do not say, 'That one is ancient, and the other is modern and recent', but

18 Al-Jāthalīq, from the Greek, head of an Eastern Christian church.

19 Reading *naqḍ*, with Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, instead of *naqṣ*, "diminishing"; *Bayān* has *ẓulm*, "injustice".

20 Al-Mubarrad, *Kāmil*, iii, 255–258 quotes 35 verses; idem, *Taʿāzī*, 306–309 quotes 27. Some verses are in *Aghānī* (xviii, 174, 179–181, 200, 208); vss. 1–2 served as lyrics for a song (*Aghānī*, xviii, 168); al-Ḥuṣrī, *Maṣūn*, 138–139 quotes 21 verses. Al-Mubarrad (*Taʿāzī*, 306) says that the poem became so popular that its transmission became confused.

21 Abū Zubayd al-Ṭāʾī, a Christian poet, composed odes on Ghassānid and Lakhmid kings before the coming of Islam. He died at an advanced age c. 61/680 (GAS, ii, 161–162). Ibn Munādhir's emulation (*muʿāraḍah*) is of Abū Zubayd's elegy on his nephew al-Lajlāj, with the same metre and rhyme (Abū Zubayd al-Ṭāʾī, *Shiʿr*, 42–56, 59 vss.)

22 See *Aghānī*, xviii, 174 for a different version, which mentions another ancient poet, ʿAdī ibn Zayd, instead of Abū Zubayd; Abū ʿUbaydah's reply is not given in either account. Abū Zubayd may have been confused with ʿAdī ibn Zayd, either because the names sound somewhat similar or because ʿAdī ibn Zayd, another Christian, used the *ubi sunt* motif (see e.g. *Aghānī*, ii, 138–139), like Ibn Munādhir in the present poem. In another report in *Aghānī* (viii, 180) Ibn Munādhir recites five verses of the poem to Abū ʿUbaydah, who is dismissive and says he now prefers to study the Qur'an; it is added that Abū ʿUbaydah disliked the poet because he had been lampooned by him.

look at the poetry and judge in favour of the most eloquent and excellent!" This is the beginning of the poem:

Every living being will meet death and perish;
no living being can hope to live forever.
Death respects nothing, it does not heed
either father or child.
Fate bores through the summits of Mount Raḍwā
and hurls boulders from Mount Habbūd,[23]
And events and time leave chinks
in a solid rock.
God does what He wills and it happens:
God's deeds cannot be undone.
[123] It is as if we are riders, hastening,
speeding to the waterhole.
Where is the lord of the strong fortress at Sūrā',[24]
or the lord of the towering, high-walled castle,
Who raised high its corners, built for it
two gates of iron, and surrounded it with soldiers?
Tribute was brought to him from everywhere between
Sanaa and Bostra and the two villages of Yabrūd.[25]
But Fate targeted his person and hit him
with a well-aimed fatal arrow.
Then no fortress protected with trench and two iron gates
could save him from death.
And where are the kings before him, who thrived
on earth with all the support and aid they got,

23 Mount Raḍwā lies in western Arabia, near Yanbuʿ. Ibn Munādhir, needing a suitable rhyme, had heard Habbūd mentioned as a mountain. A Bedouin, hearing the verse, derided him, saying, "How stupid! It is a tiny mound too small to hide someone taking a crap!" In another version a Bedouin says, "It is a well in al-Yamāmah with brackish water that nobody drinks. I've often shat in it!" (*Aghānī*, xviii, 180–181, Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-buldān* s.v. Habbūd; see also, without the scatology, al-Mubarrad, *Taʿāzī*, 307, al-Marzubānī, *Muwashshaḥ*, 454).

24 According to Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, Sūrā' is either a place near Baghdad, or Baghdad itself; Sūrā (without final *hamzah*) is said to be near ancient Babel.

25 Buṣrā, ancient Bostra, lies in southern Syria; Yabrūd is a town between Homs (Ḥimṣ) and Baalbek, or a place near Jerusalem (Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-buldān*). In *al-Kāmil* it is Bayrūd, which is a place in al-Ahwāz.

And a proud potentate, wearing a crown,
with a numerous host protecting his honour?
If the Fates[26] were to let a living being live forever,
because of his nobility, they would let ʿAbd al-Majīd live forever.
The day ʿAbd al-Majīd departed
he destroyed a cornerstone that should not have been destroyed.
Neither his bier nor its carriers were aware
of the decency and generosity that were on the bier.
They buried in the soil prudence and resoluteness,
a check[27] on any stubborn, dogged adversary.
Woe to the hands that sped him on, and the hands
that buried him—what have they buried in the soil?
ʿAbd al-Majīd destroyed my cornerstone—though I would
come to him as to a strong cornerstone.
With ʿAbd al-Majīd, my life's blood,
my good fortune stumbled, after being so vigorous.
He had been given to drink the water of youth
and he moved like a tender twig of the arak tree.[28]
All eyes went up towards him, {52}
no one could have added to his beauty.
Whenever I think of him I feel a choking
in my throat and my jugular vein.
When I call him from so remote a place
it is as if I call him while he is near.
Though he does not answer now, [124]
he used to listen and be cheerful when called.
Ah, a young man who used to adorn gatherings:
I do not see him now in well-attended assemblies!
I have betrayed my love for you since I did not yet
die of grief: this would be due to you from a steadfast lover.
But I shall weep for you as long as camel-mothers yearn
and a sturdy camel is urged in its halter.[29]

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26 The poet employs several words referring to death: *mawt* (vss. 6, 11) *ḥimām* (1), *al-manāyā* (10), *al-manūn* (2, 14). *Al-manāyā* is a plural, and *al-manūn*, too, is here treated as a plural (the verb *akhladna* being feminine plural), even though it is usually considered a singular noun (see the discussion in al-Zabīdī, *Tāj*, *MNN*).

27 Reading *lizāz* ("bolt, beam, barrier") instead of *lazāz* as in the editions (cf. *WKAS*, *Lām*, 526 where this verse is cited).

28 See above, p. 75.

29 Variations on traditional idioms for "for ever, always".

If someone alive could ransom a dead one, I would ransom you
with my soul and my possessions acquired and inherited.
Against my wishes you were hastened on before me
and against my will you were lowered into the grave.
You were my safeguard, you were a sky that brought
life to my earth and green leaves to my wood.
You threw into confusion[30] any rancorous enemy despite his malice
and you requited doubly the friendship of a dear friend.
ʿAbd al-Majīd has become a grievous loss, though he was
our hope against ungrateful, fickle Fate;
ʿAbd al-Majīd was poison to enemies
but meant everything, in the eyes of a friend, despite the envious.

This poem is a very long one but it is found and transmitted widely. The following elegy on ʿAbd al-Majīd is also admired:[31]

Eyes, you are entitled to weep
because of the great loss that occurred.
So weep for ʿAbd al-Majīd,
lament with all kinds of lamentation,
Weep[32] for him who bought encomium
and praise for a lavish price![33]
May he not go far,[34] that young man
who was munificent and open-handed!
Death quickly took him away, he said farewell
and announced his departure,
The camel-driver of death spurred him on,
chanting, in the afternoon,[35]

30 Farrāj's emendation of *talbasu* to *tublisu*, also adopted by al-Ṭabbāʿ, is unnecessary; cf. *WKAS*, *Lām*, 128b.

31 *Aghānī*, xviii, 180 (vss. 1–2, 4–5, 9, 8).

32 *W'bkn* in Farrāj's edition is an error for *wa-bkī*.

33 The sense is of course that he was very generous and therefore praised, not that he paid to be praised. The text has *li-mubtāʿi l-nadā wa-l-ḥamdi* ("who bought generosity and praise") but this cannot be correct and *nadā* is clearly a corruption of *thanā*, as a licence for *thanā'* ("praise"). "Buying praise" is a common motif in panegyric, see e.g. Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān*, i, 247: *fatan yashtarī l-thanā'a bi-mālihī* …

34 An ancient formula about someone who has died.

35 The chanting (*ḥudā'*) of the cameleer (*ḥādī*) is traditionally considered as being at the origin of Arabic metrical poetry.

Driving him on, still in early youth,
brilliant as a burnished sword.
Our sun is eclipsed, grieving
because of losing you, and is soon to set.
How I grieve for those dark lips of yours[36] [125]
and that smooth cheek!
So go! You'll see that every young man
will walk the right path.[37]

On the Barmakids he said:[38]

There came to us the princes of the Barmak family:
what good reports, what good appearances!
Every year they go on a journey to the enemy
and another journey to the ancient, venerable House.[39]
When they settle on the Plain in Mecca, it lights up
with Yaḥyā, Yaḥyā's son al-Faḍl, and Jaʿfar.[40]
Their hands were created only for generosity
and their feet only for the wooden steps[41] of a pulpit.
When Yaḥyā wants a matter to happen, all difficulties
are overcome. Excellent protector[42] and manager!

It is a very long poem. Choice verses by him are also:[43] {53}

36 *Aghānī* has "hair" (*shaʿr*) instead of "mouth" (*thaghr*).
37 *Qaṣd al-sabīl*, a Qur'anic phrase (Q al-Naḥl 16:9).
38 See the report in *Aghānī*, xviii, 201–202 (with vss. 1, 3–5 and two additional vss.), where Ibn Munādhir relates that the vizier al-Faḍl ibn al-Rabīʿ, after the fall of the Barmakid family, forced him to recite the poem to Hārūn al-Rashīd, who was angered and had the poet slapped and dragged from his presence. Soon afterwards he was given a purse with 300 dinars by a young man who identified himself as "your friend Abū Nuwās". See also al-Ḥuṣrī, *Zahr*, 423; Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabā'*, xix, 57; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, vi, 224; Ibn al-Ṭiqṭaqā, *Fakhrī*, 201 (anonymously).
39 i.e., on pilgrimage to the Kaaba in Mecca.
40 At the fall of the Barmakids in 187/803, Jaʿfar was executed; his brother al-Faḍl (d. 193/808) and his father Yaḥyā ibn Khālid ibn Barmak (d. 190/805) were imprisoned.
41 Farrāj's edition misspells *li-aʿwādi*.
42 Reading *rāʿin*, with *Aghānī*, *Zahr*, *Wafayāt*, *Fakhrī*, instead of *dāʿin* as in the editions of Farrāj and al-Ṭabbāʿ.
43 Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 871, idem, *ʿUyūn*, i, 246; vs. 2 in Ibn Abī ʿAwn, *Tashbīhāt*, 253, al-Thaʿālibī, *Lubāb*, 180.

We are content with what the Merciful has allotted to us;
we have a good reputation[44] and the Thaqafī has wealth.[45]
The Thaqafī, when he is well-dressed
and his person thrills you, is nothing but a scarecrow.[46]

Ibn Munādhir is one of the skilful modern master poets worthy of mention. We shall include only poets like him who are famous with the elite, not with the common people, and we shall not omit to quote a portion of good poetry, so that the reader of this book will profit from it and be aware of its status.

44 Instead of *ḥasab*, *ʿUyūn* has *ʿilm* ("knowledge"), *Lubāb* has *adab* ("erudition").

45 His friend ʿAbd al-Majīd ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb was a Thaqafī (i.e., of the tribe of Thaqīf); but here ʿAbd al-Majīd's brother Abū l-Ṣalt Muḥammad is meant, since he and Ibn Munādhir hated each other.

46 *Khayāl*, "image, apparition" is often used in a positive sense (the phantom of the beloved that appears in a dream or during daydreaming) but here it means "scarecrow". The word *rāʿaka*, here rendered as "thrills you" can mean "delights you" as well as "frightens you".

20 Abū l-Shamaqmaq[1]

Al-Khaṣīb ibn Muḥammad al-Khaṣīb al-Kūfī told me: Ibn al-ʿAllāf[2] told me: A Bedouin came past Abū l-Shamaqmaq, who said to him, "Hey Bedouin!" "What do you want?" "Can you make poetry?" "A bit." "Here is a dirham; make a lampoon on me!" ‖ The man thought for a moment; then he said, "I've never seen [126] anybody else who paid to be lampooned." Abū l-Shamaqmaq said, "Nor has anybody taken money for such a thing!"[3] Then the Bedouin said,[4]

I came past an erect mule's prick,
just over four cubits long, like a rope with a neck-ring,[5]
I kept rubbing it with my hand
until it was like a notched[6] arrow,
And when it rose high and grew and got moist,[7]
I struck with it Abū l-Shamaqmaq's mother's cunt.
Shall I give you more, or is it enough? Because I see
you are not successful in business.

1 Abū Muḥammad Marwān ibn Muḥammad, known as Abū l-Shamaqmaq (an odd nickname. perhaps meaning "Tall One", or "Big Nose" or "Big Mouth"), a poet born in Basra, who died in the 180s (after 796) according to Ibn al-Muʿtazz (but perhaps only after 190/806); known for descriptions of his poverty and his lampoons. He has entries in al-Marzubānī, *Muʿjam*, 319, al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, xv, 186–187. See also *EI2*, i, 150 (G.E. von Grunebaum); *GAS*, ii, 512, ix, 295; *EAL*, 46 (P.F. Kennedy); Grunebaum, "Three Arabic Poets", Pt. 3, 262–282 (including his collected verse); al-Najjār, *Shuʿarāʾ*, II, iii, 33–53; Papoutsakis, *Classical Arabic Begging Poetry*, 41–49. His poetry has also been collected in Abū l-Shamaqmaq, *Dīwān*, ed. Wāḍiḥ Muḥammad al-Ṣamad.

2 He has an entry below, § 86.

3 This is perhaps the sense of the somewhat cryptic *wa-mā akhadha* (Abeer al-Abbasi, personal communication).

4 Vss. 1–3 in al-Tawḥīdī, *Baṣāʾir*, ix, 67–68 (anonymously), vs. 1 in al-Maʿarrī, *Muʿjiz Aḥmad*, iii, 44 (attributed to Abū l-Shamaqmaq himself). In a story in Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān*, i, 58–59 (also al-ʿAbbāsī, *Maʿāhid*, i, 33) a written note (*ruqʿah*) containing vs. 1–3 was produced by Abū Nuwās when Abū l-Shamaqmaq came to him demanding payment for not lampooning him (he did the same with others). The verses were picked up by young children. It is suggested that Abū Nuwās composed them.

5 Instead of "rope" (*ḥabl*), Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān* has *jidhʿ* ("tree trunk") and *Baṣāʾir* has *ʿunuq* ("neck").

6 i.e., with a slit to fit on the bowstring.

7 Instead of *andā*, Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān* and *Baṣāʾir* have *amdhā* ("produced pre-cum"), which seems the better reading.

Abū l-Shamaqmaq said, "May God protect me from misery! I could do without this business!"

Muḥammad ibn Yazīd told me: Jaʿfar ibn Isḥāq al-Muhallabī said: I have heard Isḥāq ibn Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī say:[8] A daughter of al-Manṣūr's paternal uncle had died. When he was standing at the grave, Abū l-Shamaqmaq turned up. Al-Manṣūr asked him, "What have you prepared for this place?" "Your cousin, Commander of the Believers!" Al-Manṣūr could not help laughing, even though he seldom jested. Some people transmit this anecdote as being between Abū Dulāmah and al-Manṣūr.

The following poem is transmitted and admired:[9]

Al-Shamaqmaq[10] has turned a loser again!
He is in love and yearns for Zurārah,[11]
After it was said that he had repented
and had sobered up from all kinds of mischief,
Such as drinking musk-scented wine,
the colour of pomegranate blossom,
[127] That leaves a wise man without wit,
bewildered, unable to respond.
Often has he sung of her:
"Neighbour girl! What a neighbour friend you were!"[12]
O king, who has combined
glory with dignity,
Who has inherited noble qualities as a pious man,
from whom comes generosity and prosperity:

8 Isḥāq ibn Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī has an entry below, § 87. The following anecdote, with Abū Dulāmah instead of Abū l-Shamaqmaq, is in al-Mubarrad, *Kāmil*, i, 172–173, *Aghānī*, x, 262, and al-Ḥuṣrī, *Jamʿ*, 114. According to *Aghānī* the deceased cousin of the Caliph was Ḥammādah, daughter of ʿĪsā (ibn ʿAlī ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-ʿAbbās).

9 Ibn al-Muʿtazz's *Ṭabaqāt* is the only source for the poem; see Grunebaum, "Three Arabic Poets", Pt. 3, 273–274; Abū l-Shamaqmaq, *Dīwān*, 51–31; al-Najjār, *Shuʿarāʾ*, 11, iii, 43–44.

10 Thus, without Abū (which in a nickname can be omitted more easily than in a teknonym).

11 Eghbal thinks Zurārah ought to be emended to *zuwārah*, which was adopted by Grunebaum, but not by Farrāj or the other modern editors, who apparently, like me, were unable to make sense of *zuwārah*. The context seems to suggest a woman's name (cf. vs. 5), even though Zurārah is found normally as a man's name. It is likely that the original poem was longer.

12 *Yā jāratā mā anti jārah*: a quotation from a long poem by the pre-Islamic al-Aʿshā Maymūn, with the same metre and rhyme, see al-Aʿshā, *Dīwān*, 75 (which has *Yā jāratī*, but for the variant with *jāratā* see e.g. al-Baghdādī, *Khizānah*, iii, 308–309 and also the verse by al-ʿAkawwak below, p. 254).

I saw you in a dream,
promising to visit me.
So next morning I went to you,
and you should make your words come true:
That there came to me good tidings
of open-handedness and generosity from you.
I have left my family
in town, with only scraps as their bread,
And jackass piss for drinks, {54}
mixed with jenny piss.
They cried, and I said, "Hold on!"
For success comes with holding on,
Until I visit the Hāshimī,[13]
the man of opulence and vigour.
Now I have come with only
my panegyric as merchandise.

He also said,[14]

People have never amassed for their worldly goods
anything more useful in their home than bread.
Bread with meat: when you can get it,
you'll be safe from death by starvation;[15]
And right after that a long drink:[16]
delights are only found in drinking at length.
The feast of breaking the fast of Ramadan is approaching,
but the children have no dates, no rice.
That's because Fate has attacked them
just as a peregrine falcon attacks geese.
They had a goat, but it perished
and they were deprived of goat's milk.
If ever they saw bread on top of a high mountain [128]
they would quickly make a dash for the bread,

13 Apparently the poem is addressed to a member of the Abbasid family.
14 Grunebaum, "Three Arabic Poets", Pt. 3, 274; Abū l-Shamaqmaq, *Dīwān*, 59–60; al-Najjār, *Shuʿarāʾ*, 11, iii, 46. For another English translation, see Papoutsakis, *Classical Arabic Begging Poetry*, 47.
15 The unusual rhyme (*-zī*) calls for some rare words; *tarz* means "hunger" or "death" according to the lexicons.
16 Again a rare word, *qalz*, glossed as "continuous drinking" in the lexicons.

And if they could jump they would not fail to do so,
but how can a hungry person jump?

He also said,[17]

God be praised with gratitude!
I walk and others ride.
I had hoped for a noble steed
but I have to be content with a donkey.
If only pricks could be mounts,
then I could ride my own prick.
But I cannot bring myself to do that.
O Lord, I pray for good things from Thee!

He said, lampooning Ibn al-Bakhtakān—he composed vicious invective:[18]

There's someone who secludes himself, people do not come near him;
his chamberlain has died, emaciated, behind the door.
If they ask, "Who's coming?" it is said, "The undertaker",
and if they ask, "Who is behind him?" it is said, "His secretary."

Admired are the following verses by him:[19]

His hands are so dried up he cannot extend them;[20]
it is as if they are fastened with nails.
I used to know him, where in their stable
he would crumble the dung, lest the birds peck it.

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17 Grunebaum, "Three Arabic Poets", Pt. 3, 271; Abū l-Shamaqmaq, *Dīwān*, 46; al-Najjār, *Shuʿarāʾ*, II, iii, 41. A somewhat different version of this poem (6 vss.) is ascribed to Abū Nuwās in his *Dīwān*, v, 28–29, see also Abū Hiffān, *Akhbār Abī Nuwās*, 102–103 (3 vss.).

18 The characterisation, syntactically ambiguous, clearly refers to Abū l-Shamaqmaq. Ibn al-Bakhtakān (or Bakhtikān) is unlikely to be Abū ʿUthmān Saʿīd ibn Ḥumayd (or Ḥumayd ibn Saʿīd) ibn al-Bakhtakān, who died c. 260/860 (*GAS*, ii, 583, xvi, 427–428, cf. Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, i, 385). Someone called Ibn al-Bakhtakān in al-Ahwāz during al-Maʾmūn's reign is mentioned in Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh*, xi, 146, but it is unclear if he is the person meant here. For the poem see Grunebaum, "Three Arabic Poets", Pt. 3, 269; Abū l-Shamaqmaq, *Dīwān*, 30–31; al-Najjār, *Shuʿarāʾ*, II, iii, 40.

19 Grunebaum, "Three Arabic Poets", Pt. 3, 271; Abū l-Shamaqmaq, *Dīwān*, 45, with two additional verses; al-Najjār, *Shuʿarāʾ*, II, iii, 44–45 (3 vss.); cf. al-Bayhaqī, *Maḥāsin*, 257 (a verse similar to vs. 2, anonymous).

20 Moistness stands for generosity (cf. *nadā*: "dew" and "generosity"), dryness for its opposite.

Verses by him on someone:[21]

Your armpit holds smells that shoot
arrows of death from under your clothes.
Your wine is kept in the cellar[22] when we are thirsty,
and your bread is kept in the dust.
You use your fan on us, not to protect us from flies,
but for fear of losing food to them.

He also said,[23] [129]

The *mawālī* have gone, none are left;[24]
now we are plagued by the Arabs.
Only remnants remain
in town, sugar cane peelings,[25]
Who with their words surpass Ḥātim, {55}
and whose wits are wind in waterskins.[26]

All of Abū l-Shamaqmaq's poems are droll. When al-Ma'mūn appointed Khālid ibn Yazīd ibn Mazyad as governor of Mosul, Abū l-Shamaqmaq went with him. Just as Khālid was entering his town, the standard broke. He took this as a bad omen and was greatly worried. But Abū l-Shamaqmaq said,[27]

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21 Grunebaum, "Three Arabic Poets", Pt. 3, 268; Abū l-Shamaqmaq, *Dīwān*, 29; al-Najjār, *Shuʿarā'*, 11, iii, 39; see also al-Jāḥiẓ, *Bukhalā'*, 73, 126; idem, *Ḥayawān*, iii, 317; Ibn Qutaybah, *ʿUyūn*, ii, 36; Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, vi, 191; Ibn Dāwūd al-Iṣbahānī, *Zahrah*, 569. In *Bukhalā'*, 72, the miser is identified as Jaʿfar ibn Abī Zuhayr. The verses are also ascribed to Abū Nuwās (*Dīwān*, i, 20–21).

22 Farrāj has wrongly *al-sharāb* instead of *al-sarāb*.

23 Grunebaum, "Three Arabic Poets", Pt. 3, 268; Abū l-Shamaqmaq, *Dīwān*, 30; al-Najjār, *Shuʿarā'*, 11, iii, 39.

24 *Mawālī* is the plural of *mawlā*, "client, freedman" (see above, p. 29), usually non-Arab. Abū l-Shamaqmaq, though born in Basra, is said to be a *mawlā* of Khorasani descent.

25 The sense of *min qishr al-qaṣab* is not clear to me (probably "trash, worthless people"), nor is the occasion of these verses.

26 Presumably referring to the pre-Islamic poet Ḥātim al-Ṭā'ī, proverbial for his generosity (with his father's camels, in fact). One is tempted to read *fiʿl* ("deeds") instead of *ʿaql* ("wits"), as making a better antithesis with *qawl* ("words").

27 Grunebaum, "Three Arabic Poets", Pt. 3, 278; Abū l-Shamaqmaq, *Dīwān*, 81. See also in Ibn Rashīq, *ʿUmdah*, i, 68; al-Rāghib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, i, 90; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, vi, 341; al-Ibshīhī, *Mustaṭraf*, ii, 96. In al-Thaʿālibī, *Taḥsīn* (ed. ʿĀshūr), 37, (ed. & tr. van Gelder), 42–43, the governor is al-Ḥasan ibn Rajā' and the poet a certain al-Ḍabbī; in Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, v, 343 the poet is Abū l-Shīṣ.

The broken standard is not a sign of mischief
to be feared, or something to be removed.
Rather, it saw how small the governorate was: it bent
and broke when it found Mosul too little.

This was reported to al-Maʾmūn, who then made Khālid governor of all of Diyār Rabīʿah.[28] He wrote to him, "This is because your standard found the governorate of Mosul too small." he also rewarded Abū l-Shamaqmaq with ten thousand dirhams. Abū l-Shamaqmaq died during the 180s.[29]

28 Diyār Rabīʿah is the region of which Mosul is the main town.

29 Like before (§ 13, end), Farrāj, following Eghbal, deems it likely that the last sentence was added by a copyist. Eghbal argues in his notes (p. 15) that Abū l-Shamaqmaq must have died some years later.

21 Abū l-Yanbaghī[1]

Al-Mālikī ʿAbd Allāh ibn Ibrāhīm told me: Muḥammad ibn ʿImrān told me:[2] One day I was walking together with al-Walīd and Ibn al-Dawraqī the poet, who was a *mawlā* of ʿAbd Allāh ibn Mālik ibn Yazīd.[3] We went to Bāb al-Ṭāq,[4] where we met Abū l-Yanbaghī the poet. Before we saw him, Ibn al-Dawraqī had said to me, "What do you say about making fun of ‖ Abū l-Yanbaghī?" I said, "Don't! He [130]
is quick to come up with filthy language and he's good at extemporising with a foul tongue." Ibn al-Dawraqī replied, "What could he possibly say? His lampoons don't amount to anything. When we meet him, you must say these two verses:

> Abū l-Yanbaghī's old woman
> Is a bad crone and a whore (*baghī*)."

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1 Little is known about al-ʿAbbās ibn Ṭarkhān Abū l-Yanbaghī, a poet of Baghdad, again (like Abū l-Shamaqmaq) with a strange nickname, for *yanbaghī* is, or looks like, a verbal form ("it is proper, it ought"), here as if made a substantive noun with the article. When asked why he sported such a name, he replied, clearly joking, "Because I say *mā lā yanbaghī*, what is *not* proper" (al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xvi, 664, and compare the anecdote below). In Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, i, 524 the editor (Ayman Fuʾād Sayyid) vowels the name as Abū l-Yanbughī, perhaps because Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-buldān* mentions Yanbugh as a (very obscure) place name, but it seems unlikely that such a *nisbah* would occur after Abū. The poet's father's name, Ṭarkhān, suggests Turkish or Turkic descent. He died in prison, at an advanced age, during the reign of al-Muʿtaṣim (218–227/833–842). Anecdotes and poetry by him are found in several sources, but he has proper entries only in the present work and al-Ṣafadī's *Wāfī*, xvi, 663–665. Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, i, 524 lists him among poets, mentioning a modest collection (ten folios) of his verse. See a very brief notice in GAS, ii, 602; more in *EIr*, "Abū'l-Yanbaḡī" (Y. Richard). Al-Ṣafadī says that "most of his poetry is unmetrical (*ghayr mawzūnah*)", but the verses quoted by him or by Ibn al-Muʿtazz seem to conform to normal metrics; only in the lampooning verses quoted below by Ibn al-Dawraqī and Abū l-Yanbaghī's reply are some licences to be found. Two Persian couplets are quoted in Ibn Khurdādhbih, *Masālik*, 26 (where Abū l-Yanbaghī is misspelled as Abū l-Tuqā).

2 Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad ibn ʿImrān ibn Ziyād al-Ḍabbī (d. 255/869) was one of the tutors of Ibn al-Muʿtazz (Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, xviii, 272). The following anecdote and the verses are not found elsewhere.

3 Al-Walīd is probably al-Walīd ibn ʿUbayd al-Buḥturī, who has an entry below (§107), as has Ibn al-Dawraqī (§79).

4 Bāb al-Ṭāq (Gate of the Arch) was a neighbourhood in Baghdad (Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-buldān*; cf. Le Strange, *Baghdad*, 218: "In the days of Hârûn-ar-Rashîd the Bâb aṭ-Ṭâq at the bridge head was often used as a meeting-place of the poets, whose works the Caliph delighted to have recited before him").

When we were near him, I recited these verses. He looked angrily at Ibn al-Dawraqī, knowing that he was behind it and that the epigram was his. Without reflection he extemporised:

> And Abū l-Yanbaghī's prick
> Is rising in your mother, scarifying her.[5]

He pointed at Ibn al-Dawraqī. I looked at him; he had turned pale. I said, "Didn't I tell you he would?" He replied, "How can I get over this?"[6]

A witty epigram by Abū l-Yanbaghī is the following:[7]

> Give me strength to put up with being humbled and belittled,
> O Creator of night and day!
> There's many a donkey that rides a noble steed,
> and many a magnanimous man riding a donkey.[8]

The second verse spread far and wide, people loved it, it was recited at every gathering, assembly, market, or road. Such happens to a verse if the sense is fine and the wording sweet and easy on the tongue.

Another witty epigram is his lampoon on Rajāʾ ibn al-Ḍaḥḥāk, despite the scurrilous wording, which was employed intentionally so that the common people and children would quickly pick it up and transmit it. He says on him,[9]

> If Rajāʾ al-Jarjarāʾī
> knew of my sound opinion,

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5 He continues with the difficult rhyme *-ghī*. *Fī l-mabzaghī* could mean "at sunrise", but also "the place where a farrier or cupper makes an incision in a beast", and perhaps both senses are meant.

6 The editions have *fa-ayna l-shaqāʾ*, "So where is misery?", which I do not understand; I have read it as *fa-ayna l-shifāʾ*, which the MS seems to support.

7 Attributed to Abū Hiffān in al-Bayhaqī, *Maḥāsin*, 278; to Abū l-ʿAynāʾ in al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, iii, 551; to Ibn Qurayʿah (Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān) in al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, iii, 227; to a certain Ibn Maʿrūf in Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntaẓam*, xiv, 258. Vs. 2 attributed to Abū l-Yanbaghī in al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xvi, 664 and anonymously in al-Thaʿālibī, *Tamthīl*, 345.

8 *Jawād* means "generous man" and "noble horse". I have adopted the reading *ʿalā ḥimārī*, as found in several sources (*Tamthīl*, *Wāfī*), instead of *bi-lā ḥimāri* ("without a donkey") as in the text.

9 He is called Rajāʾ ibn Abī l-Ḍaḥḥāk al-Jarjarāʾī in Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh*, xviii, 122–124, al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xiv, 104. An administrator under al-Maʾmūn, al-Muʿtaṣim, and al-Wāthiq, he was executed in 226/840. The verses are not found elsewhere.

He would hide me in his mother's cunt
and sit down with those behind me.

On the Barmakids he said,[10] [131]

The world is like an egg
that was only half-boiled;
Then the Barmakids stuffed it
and people said, "Good!"[11]

The following verses were cited everywhere and transmitted by everybody, because they trip easily off the tongue:[12]

O king of people
and best of people to the people:
Will you forbid me to beg from people?
Then make me independent of people!
Or else leave the people alone {56}
and let me beg from people.
[I wish for good things from them,
for people are to help other people.]
Have you ever heard among the people
any poetry that is all "people"?[13]

Abū l-Yanbaghī was quick to revile people's reputations, lampooning them and tearing them to pieces. When he lampooned al-Faḍl ibn Marwān the latter imprisoned him after al-Wāthiq had incited him to do so, having been told of

10 The epigram is not found elsewhere.

11 *Nīmirishsh*, "half-boiled", is from Persian *nīm-birish*, "a poached egg (half-boiled)", see Steingass, *Persian-English Dictionary* and Dozy, *Supplément*, s.v. *nīmrisht / nīmbirisht*. *Kashsh*, following Eghbal's note ("bon, agréable"), is Persian *kash*.

12 Not found elsewhere. They are five verses of *hazaj* metre with internal rhyme, except vs. 4, which is added from the *Mukhtaṣar* (Farrāj, Appendix, 432). Using the same rhyme word, *-nās*, nine times with the same sense, is highly irregular but intentional for humorous effect. See van Gelder, *Sound and Sense*, 241.

13 In the last line the poet slyly refers to his ultra-monorhyme. One cannot help being reminded of the last Sura of the Qur'an, in which five out of six verses rhyme in *-nās* and where *malik al-nās* ("King of people") refers to God. It is not known who is addressed by the poet.

his lampooning.[14] He remained in prison until he died, yet was paid a full stipend while in prison. Abū Hiffān said,[15] "I visited Abū l-Yanbaghī when he was detained. I asked him, 'What is your story?' 'I am Abū l-Yanbaghī,' he replied, 'I said what is not proper (*mā lā yanbaghī*), so I was imprisoned where it is proper (*ḥaythu yanbaghī*)'."

Abū Hiffān also said:[16] "One day Abū l-Yanbaghī was making insinuating comments on Yaḥyā ibn Khālid when he was riding in a procession, with al-Faḍl and Jaʿfar on his right and left hand and with all the leading personages in the procession. He exclaimed at the top of his voice:

> I have been a companion of the Barmakids for ten years in succession,
> and still I have to buy my bread and rent my house!

[132] Yaḥyā looked at al-Faḍl and Jaʿfar and said, 'Abū l-Yanbaghī's evil tongue is something to be countered!' The next morning I went to him and said, 'Damn you, what have you done? Why have you courted disaster?' But he replied, 'Shut up, stupid! I swear to God, it was hardly evening, yesterday, before a purse[17] was given to me coming from al-Faḍl, and then another from Jaʿfar, plus from each of them a daily ration from their kitchen.' "[18]

14 Al-Faḍl ibn Marwān (d. 250/864) was vizier under al-Muʿtaṣim and also served al-Wāthiq (r. 227–232/842–847); see *EI2*, ii, 730, "al-Faḍl b. Marwān" (D. Sourdel).

15 Abū Hiffān (or Haffān) has an entry below, § 117.

16 The narrator is Abū l-Qāsim ibn al-Muʿtamir al-Zuhrī in the version in al-Jahshiyārī, *Wuzarāʾ*, 201–202; (ps.-)al-Tanūkhī, *Mustajād*, 107–108; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xvi, 664–665.

17 On such a "purse", containing 1,000 or 10,000 dirhams, see above, p. 73.

18 In al-Jahshiyārī's version each of them also gives him a house.

22 Abū l-Khaṭṭāb al-Bahdalī[1]

Abū Ghānim told me: Mūsā ibn Saʿīd ibn Muslim told me, on the authority of his father, who said: Mūsā al-Hādī would never admit any poet into his presence during the days of his caliphate.[2] He did not like poetry and paid no attention to it, whereas he was addicted to wine and revelry, and he was fond of listening to music. But when Abū l-Khaṭṭāb al-Bahdalī had composed his poem with rhyme letter R he asked me to convey it to the Caliph. When al-Hādī had heard it, he liked it very much. He said to the chamberlain, "Go to the gate and let the herald proclaim: Where is the lion specialist?"[3] Upon hearing this, Abū l-Khaṭṭāb knew that his poem had arrived and had made an impact. The poets were all assembled; he called out, "Here I am!" and the chamberlain took his hand and let him enter. The Caliph said, "Come on, recite it for us!" Abū l-Khaṭṭāb recited his poem with rhyme letter R and Mūsā admired it and liked it. That day he gave orders that no poet should be barred from his presence, and that they should be informed that this was because of Abū l-Khaṭṭāb. He also gave orders for Abū l-Khaṭṭāb to be awarded one thousand dinars, a robe of honour, and a riding animal. The poem is famous and is quoted here:[4]

What is it that stirs you about this abode in a winding valley,
like a mantle, its newness erased by ages?
Its marks have been swept away by wind that swirled them up
until the remains looked like lines of writing.
Since I was there its newness has been scattered[5] [133]
and altered by stormy winds early in the morning.[6]
It was an abode of the delicate, bright-cheeked woman,
slender where she wears her sash, bashful when flirting,

1 Abū l-Khaṭṭāb ʿAmr (or ʿUmar) ibn ʿĀmir al-Bahdalī (after Bahdalah ibn ʿAwf, a branch of Tamīm), poet of Basra, 2nd half of the 2nd/8th century. He has an entry in Ibn al-Jarrāḥ, *Waraqah*, 64–66 (where he is called a *rājiz*, "poet of *rajaz* verse" and where most of the quoted poems are in *rajaz* metre). See GAS, ii, 523; al-Najjār, *Shuʿarāʾ*, II, i, 153–163.

2 Al-Hādī reigned from Muḥarram 169/August 785 until Rabīʿ I 170/September 786.

3 *Nassābat al-asad*, literally "the lion genealogist", but the reference is to leonine lexicology rather than lineage, as the poem shows.

4 Al-Najjār, *Shuʿarāʾ*, II, i, 161–162. Not found elsewhere, except vss. 25–26 (see below).

5 The editions all read *azrā*, "mocked" and the MS has *arzā*, without an obvious sense. I have translated as if it were *adhrā*, which is a better fit.

6 Instead of the pleonastic *taghdū wa-tabtakirū* one would rather have expected e.g. *tumsī wa-tabtakirū*, "in the evening and early in the morning".

Like a pearl offered for a high price by merchants,
closely kept, giving them profit and no loss.
Say to Mūsā, the Caliph: His gifts
are copious, felicitous, flowing without impurities;
He is crowned with Right Guidance, robed in praise,
shirted in generosity, girded with glory,
Mūsā, who freely spends favours
as booty for all, with generosity pouring from his hands;
A proud man, raised by lordly ancestors,
superior persons, who can withstand whatever befalls them.
{57} People will not trust someone they have never trusted,
and God trusts someone to whom they give refuge and aid.
People will not break bones when they have strengthened the splints,
but never will bones be set again that they have broken.[7]
You, Mūsā, are the buttress when war's flames flare up
and when the defenders in battle are involved in a slaughter.[8]
Whenever you are angry there is no one among mankind
who is not in peril like no other peril.
No lurking lion,[9] a leonine lurker,
enemy-defying, skulking, assaulting, roaring,
Bulky, ears folded back, limb-severing, agile,
spreading terror in people's hearts, perseverant,
With spreading claws, heavy-chested,
huge-bodied, with malice in his mind,
Thick-ribbed, broad-bellied, prey-ravisher
when prowling around opponents, crusher,
[134] Thick-necked, wide-jawed, wrathful toward
the opponent when opponents meet, overpowering,
With glowering mien, grumbling, not restrained
by men's voices nor shooed away,
His snout retracted, his nose flattened,
his face as if a rock from a mountain,

7 Translation and interpretation of this verse uncertain.

8 The MS has *taḥtazirū* or *takhtazirū*; Eghbal suggests *taḥtadhirū* ("are on their guard"), Farrāj reads *tajtazirū*, followed here.

9 Here begins a long sentence, a string of descriptions, with the predicate coming in vs. 22 ("… Reaches …"). Arabic has many words that describe lions. David Larsen has made an annotated translation of a chapter on such words from a book by the lexicographer Ibn Khālawayh (d. 370/980–981), see Ibn Khālawayh, *Names of the Lion*.

Wolfish,[10] towering when you let him come out,[11]
fearless, brave, not sparing or leaving anybody,
—Reaches[12] as much as a tenth of a tenth of his courage
when heroes dismount and entangle in combat.
Nay, you are braver than it when it advances,
and you are bolder than it when it roars.[13]
Nay, upon meeting you the lion would show fear
and, afraid of you, would meet his fate that day,
O best of those whose hands fastened their belts
and best of those to whom Muḍar entrusted their command![14]
—Except the Prophet, God's Messenger, who is
superior and in whose superiority you may take pride.

These, as you may see, are powerful words, with fine descriptions and excellently arranged. The strength of the speech combines the beauties of the moderns with the motifs of the ancients.

Admired are also the following verses by him:[15]

Often I went out in the morning, before the light of dawn,
even before the speeding sandgrouse came to the waterhole,
Riding one ample[16] of three things, short of three,
long of three, and broad of three,[17]

10 Reading *dhu'ālatun*, which, as Farrāj explains, serves as a name for a wolf and is said to be a name of "the most evil of beasts of prey" (see al-Zabīdī, *Tāj*, *Dh'L*). Eghbal (followed by al-Najjār) reads *dhū allatin*, "with a spear", which seems less likely.

11 Instead of *tubrizuhū*, Eghbal suggests *yubrizuhū*, "(when a fearless one) makes him come out".

12 This continues "No lurking lion …" (vs. 14). Such lengthy enjambed passages have been used in Arabic poetry since pre-Islamic times, especially in panegyric poems.

13 Translation of *yajta'iru* uncertain; Farrāj suggests it may be an (unattested) variant of *yajtari'u*, "is audacious". I have translated as if *yajta'iru* is an (unattested) form VIII of *ja'ara*, "to low, bellow".

14 Muḍar: ancestor of the "Northern Arabs" (to which the Prophet and the Abbasid caliphs belonged). Vss. 25–26 are the only verses of this poem that are quoted in other sources, which relate that al-Hādī reacted angrily to vs. 25, exclaiming, "Except who?!" Then the poet, extemporising, added vs. 26. The Caliph rewarded him richly (al-Ḥuṣrī, *Jamʿ*, 5; Ibn Rashīq, *ʿUmdah*, i, 190; Ibn al-ʿImrānī, *Inbāʾ*, 74; al-Zamakhsharī, *Rabīʿ*, i, 723–724; Ibn Ẓāfir, *Badāʾiʿ*, 288–289; al-Suyūṭī, *Tārīkh al-khulafāʾ*, 339).

15 Al-Najjār does not include these verses. All four plus a fifth are, anonymously, in al-Rabaʿī, *Fuṣūṣ*, i, 139 and al-Shimshāṭī, *Anwār*, i, 315–316; vss. 1–2 are in al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyah*, x, 20, anonymously.

16 Reading, with *Anwār*, *bi-ḍāfī* instead of *bi-ṣāfī* (*Fuṣūṣ*, *Nihāyah*, al-Ṭabbāʿ), which also seems possible, or *bi-ṣāqī* (Farrāj), which does not.

17 See Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, i, 154 (tr. Boullata, i, 110), where Muʿāwiyah asks Ṣaʿṣaʿah ibn

White fetlocks on the hind legs, without them on the forelegs,
and a bright blaze like the light of a fire:[18]
[135] Whatever wealth people may have acquired,
my acquired wealth are noble horses!

Good verses by him are these on al-Faḍl ibn Yaḥyā ibn Khālid:[19]

People are busy with building houses,
but al-Faḍl is exerting himself building glory;
All virtuous and intelligent people
praise al-Faḍl for his governance.

Widely quoted are the following verses:[20]

I said to my leg, with its lame[21] steps,
When it complained to me about pain caused by sciatica,
And the hurting of the nerve (and there is hurt in a nerve):
"Walk! Do not think I'll use a stick!
Do not wish for what cannot be desired,
What you crave[22] is not to be hoped for!"

Ṣūḥān what kind of horse is best; the reply (in prose) is "One long of three [ears, neck, girth], short of three [back, tailbone, penis], broad of three [forehead, nose, rump], clear of three [skin, eyes, hooves]". Another version ascribes the words to Ibn al-Qirriyyah (al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyah*, x, 20).

18 On account of the rare word for "fire", *irāth* (the MS has *wirāth*), this verse is quoted in the lexicons (al-Azharī, *Tahdhīb*; Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān*; al-Zabīdī, *Tāj*, s.v. *ʾRTh*), which confirms the remark in Ibn al-Jarrāḥ, *Waraqah*, 64 that the philologist al-Aṣmaʿī considered Abū l-Khaṭṭāb's poetry as valid evidence (*ḥujjah*) for correct Arabic usage, which is exceptional for poets called "modern".

19 Al-Faḍl ibn Yaḥyā al-Barmakī was noted for his generosity; he served as tutor of crown prince al-Amīn and as vizier before his brother Jaʿfar. Imprisoned at the fall of the Barmakids in 187/803, he died in 193/808. The verses are not in al-Najjār, *Shuʿarāʾ*; they are attributed to ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-Malik ibn al-Naḍīr in *Aghānī*, xi, 286 and al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xxii, 518–519.

20 The poem is in *rajaz* metre. Vss. 1–4, 6, 8, 10, 12 (with variants) are in Ibn al-Jarrāḥ, *Waraqah*, 65–66 (with two other verses). Al-Najjār, *Shuʿarāʾ*, II, i, 156–157 quotes both versions and reconstructs a 14-verse poem based on the two sources.

21 The text has *ʿawjāʾ*, "crooked" (which is not impossible here), but I prefer to read, with *Waraqah*, *ʿarjāʾ*, "lame", in view of the following remark about the poet's lameness.

22 Instead of the unmetrical *fī saʿyiki* in the MS, Farrāj reads *fī tasaʿīki*, a form that I cannot find attested, and I have adopted Eghbal's *fī tabaghghīki*, which is a near-synonym of *Waraqah*'s *tarajjīki*.

O, the difference between pretty girls saying, "Hi, young man!"
And "His hair is grey, he stoops!"
Today, with my hair badly receding, they see {58}
One forehead at my face and another in my neck.
I keep it hidden from them so that it can't be seen,
For if it were to appear, they would throw pebbles at my head.

The poems of Abū l-Khaṭṭāb are numerous and excellent. He was lame, and al-Jāḥiẓ mentions him in his book.[23] It is asserted that, with his disgraceful nature and because people feared his quick tongue, he would send his stick to people's doors when he needed something. The stick was never barred from entering or refused and he would get what he needed.

23 The extant text of al-Jāḥiẓ's book on bodily defects, *al-Burṣān wa-l-ʿurjān wa-l-ʿumyān wa-l-ḥūlān* (*The Leprous, the Lame, the Blind, the Squint-Eyed*), also called *al-ʿUrjān*, does not mention Abū l-Khaṭṭāb.

[136] **23 Abū l-Hindī**[1]

He is ʿAbd Allāh—some say: his given name was Ghālib—ibn Ribʿī ibn Shabath ibn Ribʿī al-Riyāḥī, of the Banū Riyāḥ ibn Yarbūʿ ibn Ḥanẓalah.[2] He had moved to Khorasan, making his home in Sijistān towards the end of his life. He was a clever man, eloquent, good at extemporising, quick on repartee. His life straddled the two dynasties. He was very fond of wine and addicted to it. It is said that he would drink on the public road in Khorasan. The governor of Khorasan, Naṣr al-Laythī,[3] came past him and said to him, "Damn you, Abū l-Hindī, will you not take care of your reputation?" Abū l-Hindī replied, "If I had taken care of my reputation, it would not have been you who was appointed governor of Khorasan."

Abū l-ʿAmaythal, the poet, told me:[4] Abū l-Khansāʾ, the poet, told me:[5] Early one morning, Abū l-Hindī went to the house of a wine seller, who lived on a road called Kū-yi Ziyān, which in Arabic means Road of Loss;[6] it is in Sijistān.

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1 Ghālib (or ʿAbd al-Muʾmin, or Azhar, or al-Azhar, or, Ashʿath, or as in the present text, ʿAbd Allāh) ibn ʿAbd al-Quddūs (or ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz), a poet of Arab descent born in Kufa but active mostly in Khorasan, is known especially for his wine poetry; he is an important precursor of Abū Nuwās in this respect. He died at some date in the early years of the Abbasid period. He has entries in al-Balādhurī, *Jumal*, xii, 162–163; Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 682–683; *Aghānī*, xx, 328–334; Ibn Shākir, *Fawāt*, iii, 169–171. Al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī* has two entries on him, one under Ashʿath, ix, 276–277 and another under Ghālib, xxiii, 588–592. See *GAS*, ii, 473; *EAL*, 36 (P.F. Kennedy); *EI3*, 2008-1 (Albert Arazi). His poetry has been collected by ʿAbd Allāh al-Jubūrī (Abū l-Hindī, *Dīwān*). I have not been able to find an explanation of his nickname Abū l-Hindī, which does not look like a teknonym, because al-Hindī is not known as a personal name. Swords are often called *hindī*, "Indian", but one does not associate the poet with martial matters.

2 A branch of Tamīm, see al-Kalbī/Caskel, *Ǧamharat an-nasab*, i, Tab. 68, where he appears as "al-Azhar (A. l-Hindī)".

3 Naṣr ibn Sayyār al-Laythī, governor of Khorasan under Marwān ibn Muḥammad, the last Umayyad caliph, from 122/738 until 131/748. For different versions of the anecdote, see al-Mubarrad, *Kāmil*, ii, 350; Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, vi, 342; *Aghānī*, xx, 333–334.

4 Abū l-ʿAmaythal has an entry below, § 52.

5 He is probably Abū l-Khansāʾ ʿAbbād ibn Kusayb, mentioned by al-Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān*, i, 320, as a poet and transmitter of poetry, esteemed by Caliph al-Manṣūr. For other, shorter versions of the following anecdote and the poem, see *Aghānī*, xx, 330–331; Abū l-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī, *Ghurabāʾ*, 53–54 (tr. Crone and Moreh, *The Book of Strangers*, 48–49); al-Rāghib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, i, 438; al-Raffāʾ, *Muḥibb*, iv, 333; Ibn Shākir, *Fawāt*, iii, 170–171; al-Nawājī, *Ḥalbat al-kumayt*, 22 (French tr. Vigreux, *La Joie du vin*, 56–57); Abū l-Hindī, *Dīwān*, 20–22 and 57–58. Abū l-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī (*Aghānī*, xx, 331) says that the story is also, but incorrectly, told about Wālibah ibn al-Ḥubāb and Abū Nuwās, as it is in Ibn Manẓūr, *Akhbār Abī Nuwās*, i, 11, quoting Abū Hiffān.

6 *Kū* or *kō* is Persian for "street" or "marketplace", here written *kū-yi* with the Persian connecting particle, and *ziyān* is Persian for "damage, detriment, injury". In *Aghānī* it is Kūh(-i) Ziyān,

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There, wine was sold as well as fornication.[7] Today it is called the Road of the Upright, Decent, and Pious.[8] Abū l-Hindī said to the taverner,

I am excited about a morning drink, get me one, be quick![9]

The taverner gave him his best wine. Abū l-Hindī liked its quality; he quickly got intoxicated and fell asleep when it was still early in the day. Some other people arrived at the tavern and saw Abū l-Hindī. They asked, "Who ‖ is this man lying [137]
there flat on his face?" The taverner replied, "That is Abū l-Hindī, he wanted, hastened, got drunk, and fell asleep." "Give us what you poured for him," they said to the taverner, "And quickly, so that we may catch up with him!" He served them the wine and they drank until they were drunk and fell asleep. Then, in the afternoon, Abū l-Hindī woke up. He asked the taverner about the others. He said, "Those men came in and saw you lying down. They asked about you and I told them about you. Then they craved the same, so I poured for them the same wine that I served you. They drank their fill until they were knocked out, as you see." Abū l-Hindī said, "Quick, damn you!" "What do you want?" "Make me join them and pour me a full measure!" He got intoxicated again and fell asleep. The others woke up and asked the taverner, "Is he still sleeping even now that we have woken up?" The man told what had happened. "Damn! Make us catch up with him right now, be quick!" He brought them wine, they drank, got drunk, and fell into a heap. This continued in the same fashion for ten days in the tavern of that wine-seller; they never met him and he never met them, for whenever Abū l-Hindī woke up he found them felled and when they got up they found him felled. On this he said,[10]

Drinking companions who met after ten days,
held together by wine in Kū-yi Ziyān!
They saw me at sunrise, felled by the glass
with an old wine; the sun had not yet risen properly.
They said, "Taverner, who is that?"
He replied, "A friend let down by a morning drink!

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translated as Jabal al-Khusrān, "Mountain of Loss (or Depravity)", *kūh* being the Persian for "mountain".

7 *Fawāḥish*, plural of *fāḥishah*, "indecent thing, fornication", as well as "harlot, whore".

8 *Sikkat al-ʿudūl wa-l-mastūrīn wa-ahl al-ṣalāḥ*, which is Arabic rather than Persian, and sounds unlikely as a name of a street.

9 This hemistich is not found in other versions. *Hābi*, in Farrāj's text, is an error for *hāti*.

10 The version of *Aghānī* has eleven verses, with many variants.

He let the wine go round until it felled him on the spot;
he crashed like a bulky old camel."
They said, "Come on, make us catch up with him, be quick!
We'll be happy to be felled with him!"
{59} Then the time came that I woke up. I asked about them,
and he said, "Foreordained Fate brought them."[11]
I told him, "Make me join them quickly,
fast! For in speed lies success!"
And this was our routine, without stopping,
for ten days, waking up and being overcome.[12]
[138] We stayed together without meeting one another
in one room, without leaving it.

It is mentioned that from the time he came to Sijistān until he departed from it, he never left Kū-yi Ziyān. On this he said,[13]

People stay put, staying with their standards,[14]
and Abū l-Hindī stays in Kū-yi Ziyān,
A place that mocks those who alight there,
where wine and whores are considered permissible.
The good life is only a pretty girl
with a squatter,[15] withdrawing in a tavern.
I drink wine and disobey whoever forbids me
to seek drink and white-skinned beauties.
In my lifetime there is pleasure I delight in,
and when I die, well, my time is over.

Ṣāliḥ ibn Ibrāhīm told me: Juʿayfirān al-Muwaswis, the poet[16] told me: Ṣadaqah al-Bakrī told me:[17] Abū l-Hindī was drinking with some people in a village near

11 The pre-Islamic poet Labīd, in an elegy on his uncle who killed himself having drunk wine, uses the same expression: "I left him to foreordained fate, felled …" (*taraktuhū li-l-qadari l-mutāḥī || mujaddalan*), Labīd, *Dīwān*, 334.

12 Following Farrāj and reading *wa-nustabāḥū*, as in *Ghurabāʾ* and other versions, instead of *wa-nustarāḥū* as in the MS.

13 Abū l-Hindī, *Dīwān*, 53–54; vss. 1–2 also in al-Balādhurī, *Jumal*, xii, 163.

14 Instead of *thabata*, "stay put", *Ansāb* has *kharaja*, "go out", which may be better (see note on vs. 3).

15 *Quʿūdī* is the term that was used for the "quietists" among the Khārijites who refrained from fighting, see *EI2*, v, 372, "ḳuʿūd" (G.H.A. Juynboll).

16 Juʿayfirān al-Muwaswis has an entry below, § 99.

17 See *Aghānī*, xx, 332, Ibn Shākir, *Fawāt*, iii, 171.

Marw,[18] sitting on a roof without a parapet. He got inebriated; he was prone to getting badly drunk and then falling asleep. When it was dark, sometime in the middle of the night, when the others were drunk and wanted to go to sleep, they were afraid that Abū l-Hindī would fall off the roof, so they tied a rope firmly to his leg. But, being drunk, they made the rope too long. They fastened the end of the rope to something on the roof, carelessly. At some time during the night Abū l-Hindī got up to urinate, but he fell and was suspended from the roof, without the others noticing anything. In the morning they found him, hanging down, and dead.[19] Ṣadaqah al-Bakrī added: I read the following verses on Abū l-Hindī's grave:[20]

When I die, one day, make my shroud
from vine leaves, and my grave from a winepress,
And bury me and bury wine with me,
and put the glasses around my grave.
I expect that God, the morning after,
when I've drunk the wine, will be so good as to forgive me.

Ṣadaqah continued: I saw young men gathered around his grave, drinking, and pouring the poet's share on his grave. [139]

Choice verses by Abū l-Hindī are the following:[21]

18 Marw, or Merv, in Khorasan, now called Mary, in Turkmenistan. It does not lie in Sijistān, even though above it is suggested that Abū l-Hindī spent his last days there.

19 *Aghānī*, xx, 332 adds that, dangling down, he choked on the wine he had drunk. There also a different account of his death is given: after a drinking bout in a tavern, he went out on a cold night when it was snowing. The following morning he was found dead on the road.

20 Vss. 1 and 3 also in al-Rāghib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, i, 414. Abū Miḥjan al-Thaqafī (d. c. 16/637) preceded him with a similar verse: "If I should die, bury me by a vine whose roots after my death may slake the thirst of my bones" (tr. by Philip Kennedy in his *The Wine Song*, 21; see *Aghānī*, xix, 13).

21 Several sources only have vs. 1, preceded by another verse, among them al-Balādhurī, *Jumal*, xii, 163; Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 284–285, 682; idem, *ʿUyūn*, ii, 190; al-ʿAskarī, *Dīwān al-maʿānī*, i, 311; al-Maʿarrī, *Ghufrān*, i, 78–79. Ibn Qutaybah, *Maʿānī*, 450 (vs. 1). See also Ibn Abī ʿAwn, *Tashbīhāt*, 188 (vs. 1); *Aghānī*, xx, 330 (vss. 1–3, 7, preceded by the additional verse); al-Raffāʾ, *Muḥibb*, iv, 335 (vs. 7 and 7 additional verses); al-Rāghib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, i, 439 (vs. 1); al-Raqīq, *Quṭb al-surūr*, 606–607 (vss. 1, 3–4, 6 with three more verses). A longer poem of 16 vss. has been reconstructed from the various sources in Abū l-Hindī, *Dīwān*, 28–32. Vs. 1 is ascribed to Abū ʿAṭāʾ al-Sindī in Sībawayh, *Kitāb*, i, 260 and later works on grammar; it is ascribed to Abū l-Hindī in al-Khalīl, *ʿAyn*, viii, 54 (FDM) and some later lexicons. The additional verse preceding Ibn al-Muʿtazz's text in many versions translates as "Abū l-Hindī does not need Sālim's skin of milk; | he is content with jugs to which there

[Wine in jugs] provided with a strainer made of silk,
their necks like those of waterfowl, when thunderstruck,
Polished by women, wine well mixed with water,
perfumed with ben[22] and rose-coloured ambergris,
Spitting choice wine from flagons set in a row
and brass bowls, all neatly shaped,
A bay-red wine that has remained in the cask for ninety years,
diluted, its drinking bringing a fixed punishment,[23]
A vintage wine: when an old man drinks it,
it makes his limbs shudder, his passion increases;
He weeps for his youth that has slipped away from him,
like a prisoner in fetters and thongs.
It is contained in a hairy skin, like the stumps
of those with amputated limbs of Juhaynah and Nahd.[24]
When they have depleted its contents, another like it is brought
by noble men, people of liberality and glory.
Two days I have: one day for the emir, to visit him,
and one day for sounding the cymbal,[25] for wine, and backgammon.

{60} Admired verses by him on drinking, having a good time, and love are the following:[26]

People, help! My neighbour woman friend has tempted me
after my hair turned grey and old age wore me down:
Four years have come and gone for me,
after the sixty other years that passed,

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sticks no greasy muck". A variant of this follows below, in another poem by Abū l-Hindī, together with a version of vs. 1.

22 The ben tree (*bān*) is said to have a fragrant smell; *Aghānī* has "musk" (*misk*) instead.

23 The Islamic fixed punishment (*ḥadd*) for drinking alcohol is eighty lashes.

24 The somewhat gruesome comparison of a goatskin to a body of which the limbs have been amputated is also found elsewhere (e.g. al-Rāghib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, i, 440, a hemistich ascribed to Bashshār), often mentioning blacks, as also by Abū l-Hindī and Rabīʿah al-Raqqī, below, pp. 206, 236. The reference to the South-Arabian tribes of Juhaynah and Nahd is not clear. See on this verse also Ullmann, *Neger*, 337–338, with similar comparisons in the section on wineskins (332–345).

25 *Ṣanj*, from Persian, may mean "cymbal" but also a stringed instrument such as a harp or zither; see *EI2*, ix, 9–11, "Ṣandj" (H.G. Farmer), Sawa, *An Arabic Musical and Socio-Cultural Glossary*, 254–257.

26 Al-Raffāʾ, *Muḥibb*, iv. 340 (vss. 1, 4, 6–7); cf. Abū l-Hindī, *Dīwān*, 37–39.

After I was a strong young man
among gazelles who were excited in their exultation.[27]
Grey hair: they disliked it, though I
am a stallion when Muḍar is counted!
How good it was, drinking in Dārīn,[28] when I spent the night
and wine was poured for me after the moon had gone;
There is with us a dancing girl, striking the cymbals, [140]
and a youth who plays whenever we want,
One with a handsome nose, playing a reed-pipe
adorned with bits of gold, rubies, and pearls.
When I tell him, "Get up, pour us wine!"
he gets up and walks like a lion
And brings us a choice, cool wine
that we drink from brass cups
And from jugs, extremely wide,
held in the hand, veiled,[29] bright,
Like a young bird stirring in the covert,
wary of the saker, squatting and watching,
Or like a gazelle in a narrow valley that has reached a lookout point,
wary of the hunter in the morning:
It went up and stood upright, watching
the summit of the mountain, on top of the rock.

Other beautiful lines by him are the following—in fact all his poetry is beautiful and excellent, in particular his drinking poems:[30]

Many a musk-pod have I smelled from virgin maidens,[31]
the musk and perfume wafting over us.
"I crept towards her after her kinfolk had gone to sleep",[32]
in the morning, when her curtains had not yet been removed from her.

27 I do not understand why, in *athārat'hā l-baṭar*, the verb is feminine but the noun masculine.

28 Dārīn is a port in Eastern Arabia.

29 *Malthūm* could also be "(to be) kissed"; but cf. ʿAlqamah, in *Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, no. 120 vs. 44 (tr. Lyall, p. 337): "Their wine-jug is like a gazelle standing up on a height, bound round the spout with strips of linen, wherewith to strain through the wine", with more examples in WKAS, *Lām*, 200–201.

30 Abū l-Hindī, *Dīwān*, 34–47, Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, vi, 342 (vss. 3–4, 16).

31 Farrāj reads *ʿidhārin*, "a cheek", which seems possible, but the MS has *ʿadhārā*, "virgins, maidens".

32 A quotation of a hemistich by Imruʾ al-Qays (*Dīwān*, 31).

Abū l-Hindī does not need Sālim's skin of milk,[33]
for he has wine-jugs like gazelles with white throats,
Provided with a strainer made of silk,
their necks like those of cranes startled by sakers,
Their tops dyed, as if their backs were
animals slaughtered for idols at the appointed months,
Glittering in the hands of the wine-pourers, as if they were
the stars of the Pleiades, adorned by Sirius,
[141] Spitting out choice wine coming from wineskins
looking like old sons of Ham with bent backs.[34]

The following verses are from the same poem:

I kiss her under the bedcover; she is like
the pestle of a perfume maker, smelling of meadow saffron.[35]
He who tastes her spends his money, while the pourer
stands up, passing round the wine in the middle of the night,
Nimble, his long shirt tucked up,
and wearing a silk robe, its buttons unfastened.
And there is a girl, holding a long-necked lute,[36]
its highest string responding to her when she chants.
When her hand plucks the strings you'd say: a female dove
that answers on the tree-twigs that she makes incline,
Responding to a grey turtledove, melodious, ringed,
its feathers, long[37] and small, spread out.
When they warble in the morning light you would reckon
they are mourning women, grieving at graves.

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33 This hemistich appears in several sources as part of the poem quoted above, beginning "[Wine in jugs] provided with a strainer", with a different rhyme; see e.g. Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 284; idem, *ʿUyūn*, ii, 190; *Aghānī*, xx, 330; al-Raqīq, *Quṭb al-surūr*, 606.

34 See Ullmann, *Neger*, 338.

35 *Zarīr* is said to be a plant with yellow blossom, used for dyeing, identified as purslane in Hava's *Dictionary* and as meadow saffron in Ghaleb, *Dictionnaire*. The kissing, the bed, and the pestle seem to suggest a woman with a firm, smooth, and fragrant body, but the next verses shows that it is still about wine, unless the order of the verses has become confused.

36 *ʿŪd barbaṭ*; "The *barbaṭ* differs from the regular lute as the *barbaṭ* has a long neck and smaller belly" (Sawa, *Musical and Social-Cultural Anecdotes*, 54). But the *barbaṭ* goes back a long way (in ancient Greek the *barbitos* or barbiton was a kind of lyre) and descriptions fluctuate through the centuries.

37 The sense of *shaqāʾiq* (a word with many meanings) is not clear, the editors remaining characteristically silent.

15 And there is a glass of wine, like the eye of a cock,[38] which, before it crowed,
I drank from shining glasses,[39] unharmed by its harm.
Hardly had the sun appeared above the horizon {61}
when the houses of the town around me seemed to quake.

Admired are also these verses by him:[40]

Shabath is my grandfather, and my grandfather was honoured;
no mixed, impure roots can be imputed to me.
My origin is firmly established in Shaybān[41]
and the Banū Yarbūʿ, knights of the Arabs.
My wealth, all I have amassed, has been destroyed
by seeking the delights from the juice of grapes,[42]
And my buying from the tavern a wineskin, [142]
legs sticking up, tail cut off:
When the wine is poured out for the drinkers you would think
the wineskin is an Abyssinian, his legs severed at the knees.

From the same poem:

My friends, both of you, pour me wine, the best!
Kept in white jars,[43] not in caskets,
A Chosroan drink:[44] when an old man
tastes it, he sings and is excited;
It makes men, when they are excited,
shout, wrangle, bellow.

38 An old simile, cf. al-Aʿshā, *Dīwān*, 203; al-Mutanakhkhil, in al-Qurashī, *Jamharah*, 480.

39 I am unsure of the sense of *bi-zuhrin*; *zuhr*, pl. of *azhar*, "shining" is often said of stars and perhaps the glasses are meant here.

40 Abū l-Hindī, *Dīwān*, 17–19; Ibn Abī ʿAwn, *Tashbīhāt*, 307 (vss. 3, 5); Ibn al-Shajarī, *Ḥamāsah*, 838 (vss. 3–5); al-Rāghib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, i, 440 (vs. 5b); al-Raqīq, *Quṭb al-surūr*, 608 (vss. 3–5); Ullmann, *Neger*, 336–337 (vss. 4–5).

41 Shaybān (possibly the famous tribe of Shaybān, a branch of Bakr ibn Wāʾil) does not appear in the male line of the poet's descent, so he probably refers to a female line.

42 I have followed Ullmann's reading (close to the version of *Tashbīhāt*): *atlafa l-māla wa-mā jammaʿtuhū | ṭalabu l-ladhdhāti min mā' i l-ʿināb*, instead of that of the *Ṭabaqāt*: *ajmaʿu l-māla wa-mā ajmaʿuhū | aṭlubu l-ladhdhata fī mā'i l-ʿinab*.

43 *Bawāṭī* (sg. *bāṭiyah*) are made of glass (Lane, *Lexicon*, BṬY).

44 *Khusrawānī*, after Khusraw/Chosroes, name of Sasanid emperors.

When someone is inebriated with it,[45]
  they raise his limbs on a wooden bier,
Then they lament, then they weep,
  and then they burst out laughing—O what fun!

It is said that a number of men, the likes of Abū Nuwās, al-Khalīʿ, Abū Hiffān,[46] and people in their category, were only able to describe wine because of the poetry by Abū l-Hindī they had seen and by extracting motifs from his verse. From the same poem are the following verses:

... While he lies prostrate, on his face,
  with foam on his jaws, his limbs limp,
The drinkers lift his head
  with some effort, but he relapses, rolls over,
For a while; then they call him by his name
  and the man responds to the call and jumps up,
Shaking the dust from his head,
  earth, ashes, debris ...
They bring him something to ablute himself with, so that he could
  perform the salat, but he dawdles and frowns.
Whenever a foot prods him, he takes it
  as a pillow, while the pandore plays on.
[143] His trousers are tucked up, the loop
  of the waistband is gone.

Abū l-Hindī also said,[47]

Pour its coolness on your liver:[48]
  I see that people die.

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45 Instead of *qāmat bihī*, Eghbal suggests reading *mātat bihī*, "(when someone, inebriated,) dies of it", which would make the following rather macabre. The sequel, however, suggests that nobody dies.

46 For Abū Nuwās, see below, § 33; al-Khalīʿ, "the Rake", is al-Ḥusayn ibn al-Ḍaḥḥāk, whose entry below is § 46; Abū Hiffān's entry is § 118.

47 Abū l-Hindī, *Dīwān*, 54; Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān*, iii, 28 (said by Ḥamzah al-Iṣfahānī to have inspired a poem by Abū Nuwās); al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, ix, 277 (vss. 1–3), Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, vi, 343 (vs. 1), where it is said that the poet, while drinking with a friend, composed this line when he saw a dead man being carried on a bier. For another English translation of the lines, see Kennedy, *The Wine Song*, 100.

48 On "liver", see above, pp. 165, 171; *ʿIqd* has "heart".

Leave alone those people who dislike drinking it:
they do not know what wine can do.
Were they to drink it and were inebriated just once,
they would rave about wine.
I know that people, in all ages, of old,
have always sodomised and fornicated.

24 Abū Ḥayyah al-Numayrī[1]

Al-Mubarrad told me: Ibn Abī Ḥ.b.rah[2] told me: Abū Ḥayyah al-Numayrī transmitted the poetry of al-Farazdaq. He lived in Basra and his name was al-Haytham ibn al-Rabīʿ. He was one of the most mendacious of all people. "One day", said Ibn Abī Ḥ.b.rah,[3] "I heard him say, 'I once came across a gazelle. I shot an arrow at it, the gazelle swerved aside, dodging my arrow, the arrow followed
{62} it, ‖ the animal dodged it again, but—I swear to God—the arrow was too smart for it and killed it in the end.'"

Ṣāliḥ ibn Ibrāhīm told me: Abū l-Mihzam the Bedouin told me: Abū Ḥayyah al-Numayrī had a sword that he called Death's Spittle.[4] Any ladle would have been sharper! One night a dog entered his house, unnoticed by him. When he heard it, he thought it was a burglar. He got up and exclaimed, "You, deluded one who dares to make bold with us! I swear to God, you have come to meet with little good, with a burnished sword, with a soul that spurns wrong and disdains dishonour, whose neighbour is safe and whose enemy is fearful! Have you—may your mother be bereft of you!—not heard of Death's Spittle? Its stroke is
[144] famous, it is never blunt, it brings death near, it annuls hope! Are you not ‖ afraid, if your mind has made you tread blindly into the dark among us and

1 Al-Haytham ibn al-Rabīʿ (d. between 158/775 and 180/796), known as Abū Ḥayyah al-Numayrī (of the tribe of Numayr ibn ʿĀmir), lived in Basra. He composed odes on the late Umayyad and the early Abbasid caliphs. He was said to have been slightly deranged, being *majnūn* or having a "*lūthah*" (al-Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān*, i, 385, ii, 225, 229; Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 563, *Aghānī*, ii, 2), but there are no traces of this in his poetry; Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih describes him as "the maddest of people and the best of poets" (*ʿIqd*, vi, 164). He has entries in Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 774–775; *Aghānī*, xvi, 306–310; al-Marzubānī, *Muwashshaḥ*, 355–356 (among the *Islāmiyyūn*, not the *muḥdathūn*); al-Khālidiyyān, *Ashbāh*, ii, 103–109; al-Nashshābī, *Mudhākarah*, 252–256; Ibn Shākir, *Fawāt*, iv, 242–244; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xxvii, 402–404. See *GAS*, ii, 464–465, ix, 288 *EI2*, *Suppl.*, 24 (Ch. Pellat). His poetry has been collected by Yaḥyā al-Jubūrī (Abū Ḥayyah, *Shiʿr*). He is the only poet in the present book who is represented in the large collection of ancient (pre-*muḥdath*) poetry, Ibn Maymūn's *Muntahā l-ṭalab*, with eleven long poems (531 verses) in Bedouin style (iii, 40–74).

2 Vowelling unknown.

3 The anecdote is often quoted; see al-Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān*, ii, 229; Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 775; idem, *ʿUyūn*, ii, 27; *Aghānī*, xvi, 309; al-Tawḥīdī, *Baṣāʾir*, ix, 138; Ibn Shākir, *Fawāt*, iv, 243; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xvii, 403; and see Cachia, *The Arch Rhetorician*, 120 (al-Nābulusī's explanation of a verse by Ibn Nubātah alluding to it).

4 The sword called *Luʿāb al-Manīyyah* and the following anecdote are often mentioned; see e.g. Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 774–775; *Aghānī*, xvi, 307–308; al-Thaʿālibī, *Thimār*, 687–688. It may seem an odd name for a sword, but it may refer to the lethal "spittle" of poisonous snakes (and Abū Ḥayyah literally means "father of a snake").

enticed you to do what you will not find easy?[5] If I summon Qays,[6] they will come at you, filling the earth with horsemen and footmen—blessed they are and blessed their multitude! You are, by God! not far from the calamity they will bring you and you'll sink in their deep sea! If you stay, they will pounce upon your transgression; if you flee, they will overtake you!"

Thus he went on for some time, too afraid to enter the room. But then see! A dog came out to him, wagging its tail. "Praise God," he said to it, "who has made a dog of you, and who spared me going to war with you!" He sat down but did not enter the room. They asked him, "Why don't you go indoors?" He replied, "Perhaps the burglar is still inside, and it was his dog that came out."

The following verses by Abū Ḥayyah al-Numayrī are admired:[7]

Ah, greet, after the departure of the beloved, these dwellings!
They are dressed in decay, with what nights are dressed in.
When Day and Night make a claim on a man
the claim on him is made by something that never tires of claiming.

The following verses are also admired:[8]

Your eyes are generous with tears, remembering the past,
when dry eyes are stingy with tears;
Two congenial friends they are, gushing, choked with passion,
just as a gulch, welled[9] in dry land, may gush out.
The lament of the doves stirs my longing,
and the lament of moaning women, grieving at funerals,
For the parting of intimate friends, their eyes
like the eyes of oryx cows that cross the stony grounds.
Those, after having come together in passion,
are a tribe split asunder and become separate.

5 I follow Farrāj's suggestion, reading *hayyinan* ("easy") instead of *fīnā* ("with us").

6 The tribe of Numayr belongs to Qays, the Northern Arabs.

7 The verses are often quoted, see e.g. al-Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān*, ii, 229; al-Mubarrad, *Kāmil*, i, 284; Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 775; Ibn al-Muʿtazz, *Badīʿ*, 76 (vs. 1, as an example of a good opening); Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, vi, 164–165; *Aghānī*, xvi, 306 (as lyrics for a song), 310, xviii, 204; al-Āmidī, *Muʾtalif*, 103; al-Marzubānī, *Muwashshaḥ*, 555 (vs. 1); al-Qālī, *Amālī*, ii, 185; al-Ḥātimī, *Ḥilyah*, i, 154; al-Murtaḍā, *Amālī*, i, 448; Ibn Rashīq, *ʿUmdah*, i, 334; Ibn Maymūn, *Muntahā*, iii, 43 (as vss. 1 and 11 of a poem of 66 vss.), cf. Abū Ḥayyah, *Shiʿr*, 100, 101.

8 Abū Ḥayyah, *Shiʿr*, 152 (Ibn al-Muʿtazz's text is the only source).

9 I follow Eghbal's suggestion, *ʿayyanatʾhu*, instead of *ghayyabatʾhu* (Farrāj).

[145] They left in my heart, when they went away, a gash,
that refused to vanish, though gashes may vanish.

Deemed good are these verses by him:[10]

A crow who calls on a day when the heart's reason is not
sound, and when the tribe that has gone will never meet again:
May you, crow of separation, be requited with evil! So often
have I been saddened by the cawing of a croaking[11] crow!

Choice verses by him are the following:[12]

The time of youthful love: would that those short days,
now past, returned for us!
Those nights when on my head was a black crow,
made to fly from me by grey hair.
May God not make my youth[13] go far away,
even though it is nothing but a memory.
Its place[14] has now turned barren,
sterile, a wasteland, a wilderness, a desert.
5 Though calumniators[15] speak scandalously of it,
I cannot find myself able to apologise for it.
{63} My neighbour woman friend! Fickle Time has destroyed
excellent men before me.
She mocked me when she saw that old age
had covered my head, which was set alight.

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10 Al-Ḥuṣrī, *Jamʿ*, 219 (vss. 4–5 of a poem of 14 vss.), cf. Abū Ḥayyah, *Shiʿr*, 157.

11 I read, with *Jamʿ*, *al-munaʿiqī* instead of *al-muṭawwaqī*, "ringed", which is commonly used for doves but never, to my knowledge, for crows (the ring-necked or collared crow, *Corvus torquatus*, does not seem to be native in the Middle East).

12 Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥayawān*, iii, 429 (vss. 1, 3–4); al-Marzubānī, *Nūr al-qabas*, 154 (vs. 2); al-Khālidiyyān, *Ashbāh*, ii, 109 (vss. 1–2, 4, 3, 7, 6, 8); al-Murtaḍā, *Amālī*, i, 445 (vss. 1–3 with an additional vs.); Ibn Maymūn, *Muntahā*, iii, 69–70 (where they are vss. 2–6, 8, 7, 9–14 of a poem of 57 vss. in praise of al-Ḥakam ibn Ṣakhr al-Thaqafī, unidentified); cf. Abū Ḥayyah, *Shiʿr*, 42–45.

13 All other sources have "that crow" instead of "youth".

14 Farrāj and al-Ṭabbāʿ have *mūniʿuhū*, "Its ripeness", but I follow Eghbal, who reads it as *mawqiʿuhū*, as also in *Ashbāh* (cf. *mawḍiʿuhū* in the other sources).

15 The editions have *mashāyikh*, "old men", as in the MS; I read, with *Muntahā*, *masāyiḥ* (as a variant of *masāyīḥ*, pl. of *misyāḥ*).

Though you see my hair as it is now,
and you often recoil from what you see,
Yet I would go out when pretty women were bent on seeing it
and I would rob sweet-smelling girls of their veil.
I used to trail the train of youthful love
and loosen my loincloth on to my heels.
With many a shining-faced woman, hardly able to get up
unless slowly and out of breath,[16]
Have I been alone, vying in conversation together,
now openly, now secretly.
It would be as if the sun had put on her veil
when she wound a veil around herself.

Abū Ḥayyah married a paternal cousin of his, but she died. Grieving for her almost made him leave ‖ this world. His better poems are all about her, describing her as she was when alive and elegising her after her death. I have never known any intelligent man or well-educated secretary who did not quote some verses by Abū Ḥayyah al-Numayrī. Some of those verses are:[17] [146]

When she could not but quit with her affection
and muddy the drink that once was limpid,
I drank the turbid, muddied water of her love.
How could one, when parched, loathe turbid water?

He also said:[18]

Spare your tears, let not crying waste them,
and restrain your eyes from spilling tears!
Your tear-ducts, however they may generously spend, will not last,
nor will your eyelids or your eyes in that case.

16 i.e., with her heavy haunches.

17 The verses were quoted by al-Aṣmaʿī, defending his preference for an ugly donkey to the horses of the caliphs, see al-Jurjānī, *Kināyāt*, 322–323; idem, *Muntakhab*, 293–294; Ibn al-Anbārī, *Nuzhah*, 99; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh*, xxxvii, 87; Abū Ḥayyah, *Shiʿr*, 180. Al-Ḥuṣrī, *Zahr*, 268 says that the verses are part of the poem two verses of which have been quoted before (p. 211), but they are not found in *Muntahā l-ṭalab*.

18 Anonymously in Abū Tammām's *Ḥamāsah* (al-Marzūqī, *Sharḥ*, 1247–1248); al-Rāghib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ii, 45; attributed to Ibn Harmah in Ibn Dāwūd, *Zahrah*, 393; and to Ṭurayḥ ibn Ismāʿīl (d. 165/782) in *Aghānī*, vi, 101 (as lyrics of a song); see Abū Ḥayyah, *Shiʿr*, 189.

And also:[19]

She dropped her veil, revealing a sun, shielding herself
with the two fairest things that were ever joined: hand and wrist.
Then he[20] went, not knowing whether it was when the sun was rising
or in the gloom of a dark night.

He composed more good poetry, but we shall not depart from what we have set to do in this book. He died in the 210s.[21]

19 Vs. 1 with five other verses are in Abū Tammām, *Ḥamāsah* (al-Marzūqī, *Sharḥ*, 1369); al-Ḥuṣrī, *Zahr*, 263; al-Murtaḍā, *Amālī*, i, 446; Ibn Maymūn, *Muntahā*, 55 (as vss. 18, 20 of poem of 41 verses, cf. Abū Ḥayyah, *Shiʿr*, 76, 77). Vs. 1 is quoted in al-Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān*, ii, 229; Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, vi, 165; al-ʿAskarī, *Ṣināʿatayn*, 467. As al-Murtaḍā and others note, this verse echoes al-Nābighah al-Dhubyānī's verse: "The veil fell down (she did not mean to drop it). | She picked it up and shielded with her hand herself from us" (Ahlwardt, *The Divans*, 10).

20 The subject, mentioned in vs. 19 of the poem, omitted here, is "Ibn ʿAjlān, the erring one", viz., ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAjlān al-Nahdī, pre-Islamic hero of a romantic tale, who died of his love of Hind (see e.g. Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 716–717).

21 i.e., between 825 and 834, which is certainly incorrect. It is likely to be a copyist's addition.

25 Khalaf al-Aḥmar[1]

Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Aʿlā told me: Abū Kirdīn[2] told me: Khalaf al-Aḥmar's teknonym was Abū Muḥriz. He was knowledgeable about grammar, recondite vocabulary, genealogy, and history. ‖ He was a naturally talented and proficient [147] poet, who composed much fine poetry. Of his peers among scholars and erudite people no one composed more poetry than he.

Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Jaʿfar ibn al-Haytham told me: Ayyūb ibn Isḥāq told me: "I said to Khalaf al-Aḥmar, 'Abū Muḥriz, dictate to me some verses on the verses of Abū Umāmah al-ʿAbdī!' He replied, 'Write this, by So-and-so' (a man I did not know):[3]

Umāmah, Fate's doings have
destroyed Iram and ʿĀd,[4]

1 Abū Muḥriz Khalaf ibn Ḥayyān (d. c. 180/796), known as Khalaf al-Aḥmar ("the Red"), was a *mawlā* born in Basra, a famous transmitter of ancient poetry and a good poet himself (known especially for descriptions of snakes). On his connection with Abū Nuwās see below, §33. His name is linked to a major riddle of early Arabic poetry: are two of the most famous and most celebrated pre-Islamic odes—ascribed to the "brigand poets" Taʾabbaṭa Sharrā and al-Shanfarā—genuine, or are they splendid pastiches composed by Khalaf? See also below. He has entries in Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 789–780; Abū l-Ṭayyib al-Lughawī, *Marātib*, 80–81; al-Zubaydī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 161–165; Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, i, 137–138; al-Marzubānī, *Nūr al-qabas*, 72–80; al-Qifṭī, *Inbāh*, i, 383–385; Ibn al-Anbārī, *Nuzhah*, 53–54; Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, xi, 66–72; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xiii, 353–355. See also *GAS*, ii, 450–461; *EI2*, iv, 919 (Ch. Pellat). His poetry and stories about him have been collected in al-Najjār, *Shuʿarāʾ*, 11, i, 11–119.

2 For the vowelling of this unusual name see al-Zabīdī, *Tāj al-ʿarūs*, *KRD*; he is probably the Abū Kirdīn ʿUmar ibn al-Khalīl mentioned there.

3 This passage is confusing: what does "on (*ʿalā*)" mean in "some verses on the verses", and who is Abū Umāmah al-ʿAbdī? The following poem sheds light on the confusion. The verses are, with considerable variations, in Abū Tammām's anthology *al-Waḥshiyyāt* (also called *al-Ḥamāsah al-ṣughrā*, "the lesser *Ḥamāsah*"), attributed to the obscure pre-Islamic poet Jandal ibn Ashmaṭ al-ʿAnazī (*Waḥshiyyāt*, 162–163, nine vss.; on p. 221 his name is Jandal ibn Ashmaṭ al-ʿUmayrī al-ʿAbdī), and also in al-Buḥturī's *Ḥamāsah* (111, seven vss.), attributed to ibn Ashmaṭ al-ʿAbdī (on pp. 121 and 135 his name is given as Jidhl ibn Ashmaṭ), and in al-Tawḥīdī, *Baṣāʾir*, vi, 95–96 (nine vss.), attributed to a "*jāhilī*". It appears that al-ʿAnazī is a corruption of al-ʿAbdī (of the tribe ʿAbd al-Qays). In the poem a daughter called Umāmah is addressed, so Jandal ibn Ashmaṭ al-ʿAbdī is also Abū Umāmah al-ʿAbdī. I think it probable that the introduction of the poem is garbled and that Khalaf was asked to dictate verses by Jandal ibn Ashmaṭ and complied with the request. Whether Khalaf's subsequent confession was sincere (repentance on one's deathbed, a common topos) or rather a lie (enhancing his own reputation as a poet) must remain moot. But such a confession or boast must have become known to Abū Tammām and al-Buḥturī, who were apparently unconvinced and included the verses in their anthologies.

4 Iram and ʿĀd are pre-Islamic Arabian peoples that were destroyed by God according to the

[It destroyed David and expelled
Iyād from their abodes,][5]
And also struck and brought down Asʿad al-Khayrāt,
who gathered the equipment,[6]
With shining swords and coats of mail, neatly ringed,
and who held inherited possessions.
They[7] wrenched him away. Fate leaves,
after welfare, ruin.
{64} It is as if he has never been,
except for a memory, when he perished.
Umāmah,[8] the cooking pot does not shame
your father, nor do the ashes.[9]

When Khalaf was mortally ill I paid him a visit. 'Those verses', he said, 'are not by the poet I mentioned; in fact, they are mine. I ask God's forgiveness!' He had turned pious and had given up composing poetry for a while."

Others assert that he went back to composing poetry and did not give it up until he died. Diʿbil said, "When Khalaf al-Aḥmar and I were discussing the poetry of Ta'abbaṭa Sharrā and quoted his verse:[10]

Qur'an. Both are mentioned in Q al-Fajr 89:9 and ʿĀd also in numerous other passages. Iram is sometimes taken to be the name of a place.

5 The parenthesis is taken from the *Mukhtaṣar* (ed. Farrāj, p. 432). Iyād ibn Nizār ibn Maʿadd is an ancient Arab tribe, who in pre-Islamic times moved from Tihāmah to Mecca, becoming masters of the Kaaba, but were driven out, ending up in Iraq. Even David/Dāwūd, powerful king and prophet, called a "man of might … whose realm We strenghtened" (Q Ṣād 18:17, 20), fell victim to Fate. Instead of *fa-abāda* ("and destroyed"), *Waḥshiyyāt* has *wa-btazza* ("and snatched"), and al-Buḥturī's *Ḥamāsah* has *wa-ḥtaṭṭa* ("and took down").

6 Asʿad al-Khayrāt ("Asʿad of Bounties") is probably Abū Umāmah Asʿad ibn Zurārah, nicknamed Asʿad al-Khayr, one of the Anṣār, a contemporary of the Prophet; see e.g. al-Balādhurī, *Jumal*, i, 282. Instead of *al-ʿibādā* ("the people"), as in the text, I read, with all other sources, *al-ʿatādā* ("the equipment"), which better suits the next verse, where the "coats of mail, neatly ringed" (*al-ḥalaqi l-muqaddari sarduhū*) alludes to Q Sabaʾ 34:11, in a passage about David/Dāwūd (with thanks to Abeer al-Abbasi).

7 The subject (feminine plural) is unclear. Perhaps instead of *fa-khaṭafnahū* one should read, with al-Buḥturī, *Ḥamāsah, fa-ḥtaṭṭahū*, "(Fate) took him down".

8 Instead of *A-Umāma*, *Waḥshiyyāt* and *Baṣā'ir* have *A-bunayya*, so Umāmah, which may be a male or a female name, is here a son rather than a daughter.

9 A much-used cooking pot and quantities of ashes: common metonyms for generosity.

10 The discussion is obviously about the poem of which this is the opening verse. This famous poem is attributed to the pre-Islamic "brigand poet" (*ṣuʿlūk*) Ta'abbaṭa Sharrā, see Abū Tammām's *Ḥamāsah* (al-Marzūqī, *Sharḥ*, 827–839, 24 vss.), preceded by al-Marzūqī's com-

In the gorge, this side of Salʿ,
lies a slain man, his blood still unavenged,

Khalaf said to me, 'I swear to God, I composed it, not Taʾabbaṭa Sharrā.'"

Ibn Thumāmah told me, on the authority of Ibrāhīm ibn Isḥāq, who said: Abū l-Ḥasan al-Madāʾinī said:[11] When Khalaf al-Aḥmar was dying, they said to him, "Say: 'There is no god but God!'" But he remained silent. They repeated it, ‖ but he was silent. They said it a third time, and then he said, [148]

Dried up is the amount with which his pen flowed.

He kept repeating this until he died.

Aḥmad ibn Naṣr told me: al-Riyāshī told me: al-Aṣmaʿī said to me: Khalaf al-Aḥmar was a *mawlā* of Abū Burdah ibn Abī Mūsā,[12] who freed him and his parents. He had belonged to the captives of Farghānah.[13] On this, Abū Nuwās said:[14]

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ment "It is mentioned that it is by Khalaf al-Aḥmar, which is correct". Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 790, also says that Khalaf composed the poem and that he falsely ascribed it to Taʾabbaṭa Sharrā's sister; the same attribution is found Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, iii, 298–300, where the complete poem is quoted. In al-Khālidiyyān, *Ashbāh*, ii, 113–114 the poem is attributed to al-Shanfarā (and see the following discussion, 114–119). See also e.g. al-Qifṭī, *Inbāh*, i, 383, al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xiii, 354. For English translations and studies, see Stetkevych, *The Mute Immortals Speak*, 57–73 and Jones, *Early Arabic Poetry*, i, 229–247; Jones also gives German translations by Goethe and Rückert (rhymed), the former taken from Goethe's notes to his *Westöstlicher Divan* (131–135). The translation of *damuhū lam yuṭallū* as "In dessen Blut | Kein Thau herabträuft" shows that he, or rather his source (possibly the 18th-century Albert Schultens), confused the verb *ṭalla* with the noun *ṭall*, "dew". See also Heinrichs, "Taʾabbaṭa Sharran, Goethe, Shākir". Most modern scholars seem to disbelieve Khalaf's confession, and I too believe he was probably boastful rather than contrite.

11 The anecdote is not found in other sources.

12 Abū Burdah ibn Abī Mūsā al-Ashʿarī (d. 103/721–722 or the following year), first cadi of Kufa. The report is also in Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 789 and later sources.

13 Farghānah is modern Fergana in Uzbekistan. It was taken (at first only temporarily) from its Sogdian rulers by the Muslim conqueror Qutaybah ibn Muslim in 94/712–713.

14 Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān*, i, 354–355 (as part of a poem of 12 *rajaz* verses); al-Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥayawān*, iii, 492–493 (vss. 1 and 5, preceded by six other vss.); Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 789; Abū Hiffān, *Akhbār Abī Nuwās*, 109 (vs. 1); al-Zubaydī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 164–165 (vss. 1–4 with six other vss.). For verses from the poem not quoted here see also Ibn Abī ʿAwn, *Tashbīhāt*, 413, al-Jurjānī, *Asrār*, 200. In the *Dīwān* and *Akhbār Abī Nuwās* it is said that Abū Nuwās offered the poem for approval to Khalaf in his lifetime; Khalaf liked it. In some accounts (e.g. al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xiii, 355) Khalaf takes the initiative, inviting Abū Nuwās to lament him in verse. See also Wagner, *Abū Nuwās*, 355 (with German translation).

The sum of knowledge has perished, since Khalaf has perished:
Only what he knew could be counted as knowledge.
Whenever we were near him,[15] we drew from him
Transmitted knowledge that cannot be gained from books:
A water-rich wellspring, one that never failed to flow.

Often recited are also the following verses by him:[16]

May our pilgrims be watered by the rain-stars of the Pleiades,[17]
despite their withholding and miserliness!
They gathered their sandals and kept them safe,
securing them behind a door with a lock.
While I may give[18] as a present fruit or a kid
or ten chickens, they would send a sandal,
And two toothbrushes, each a cubit long,
and ten foul palm-tree fruits.[19]
They are errant, haughty people; they have a fine appearance
but their sky has clouds without a downpour.
Their lineage is traced to Quraysh
but their deeds are the deeds of ʿUkl.[20]

He composed much memorable poetry, and his poems are to be found among the people. It is said that he was al-Aṣmaʿī's teacher.

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15 Although *nadnu minhu* makes good sense, I wonder if the original had *nadlu minhu*, "we drew buckets from him", i.e., "from his wellspring of knowledge", in view of the following *naghtarif*, literally "we scooped", *riwāyah*, "transmitted knowledge" (cognate with *rayy*, "drinking one's fill"), and, in vs. 5, more about wells.

16 Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān*, iii, 111–112; idem, *Ḥayawān*, v, 284–285; Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 790; idem, *ʿUyūn*, iii, 38 (anonymously). It is not clear who are meant by "our pilgrims" (*ḥujjājanā*); as vs. 6 says, they were part of Quraysh.

17 In popular Arab meteorology stars and constellations, and the Pleiades (*al-Thurayyā*) in particular, are associated with rain.

18 Vowelled as "you may give" (*ahdayta*) in Ibn Qutaybah, Shiʿr, and as *ahdaytu* in the other sources.

19 *Muql* has several meanings, among them the fruit of the doum palm.

20 Quraysh is the most venerated tribe, being the Prophet's; ʿUkl is a small tribe, characterised, according to Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿArab* (ʿ*kl*), by "simple-mindedness and little understanding; and therefore anyone who is dim-witted and deemed stupid is called ʿUklī."

26 Abū l-Ghūl[1] [149]

Ḥātim ibn Muṭarrif[2] told me: Abū l-Abrad al-ʿAbdī told me:[3] Abū l-Ghūl entered into the presence of al-Rashīd and recited a panegyric poem on him. Al-Rashīd said, "Abū l-Ghūl!" "At your command, our lord, Commander of the Believers!" "We would like to hear some more of your verses. Would you show us by extemporising something?" The poet replied, "By God, Commander of the Believers, you are not fair to me!" "And why not? It is only a test." "Because thereby you combine the awe of the caliphate and the glory of sovereignty with the embarrassment of improvising! But I hope I shall achieve what you desire." He turned round and found that al-Amīn was standing on his right and al-Maʾmūn on his left.[4] Then he said,

You have built for ʿAbd Allāh, after Muḥammad,
the summit of Islam's pavilion;[5] its wood turned green.
They are the two tent-ropes—may God bless them! {65}
And you, Commander of the Believers, are its central column.

Al-Rashīd said, "May God bless you, too! Well done, well said!" The poet replied, "Commander of the Believers, you may test me any way you like, to remove any doubt you may harbour about my poetry!" But the Caliph said, "No need for

1 According to al-Āmidī, *Muʾtalif*, 163, two poets are known as Abū l-Ghūl: Abū l-Ghūl al-Ṭuhawī and ʿIlbāʾ ibn Jawshan Abū l-Ghūl al-Nahshalī. Sezgin, in the entry on the former (*GAS*, ii, 341) believes there are three, mentioning the present Abū l-Ghūl in a footnote. Abū l-Ghūl al-Ṭuhawī, represented in Abū Tammām's *Ḥamāsah* (al-Marzūqī, *Sharḥ*, 38–44) was active in late Umayyad times and is not meant here. Ibn Qutaybah seems to have confused the two (see his entry on Abū l-Ghūl al-Ṭuhawī, *Shiʿr*, 429). Abū l-Ghūl al-Nahshalī's dates are unknown, so it cannot be excluded that he is meant here. Verses by "Abū l-Ghūl" on the Barmakid vizier Yaḥyā ibn Khālid and on Muḥammad ibn Zubaydah quoted by al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, iv, 232 and 270 are probably by the present Abū l-Ghūl. Al-Marzubānī, *Muwashshaḥ*, 31 gives an *isnād* mentioning "Abū l-Ghūl al-Nahshalī, on the authority of Abū l-Ghūl the older (*al-akbar*)", the latter presumably referring to al-Ṭuhawī. See also al-Baghdādī, *Khizānah*, vi, 434–440. It is possible that Ibn al-Muʿtazz or his source were as confused as we are and therefore omitted to specify details about his name and his life.

2 Thus, instead of M.ṭ.r.q as in the text, which unlike Muṭarrif does not yield a known name.

3 Different versions of the following story with the verses are found in al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, iii, 761–764; Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, i, 310; al-Zajjājī, *Majālis al-ʿulamāʾ*, 33–34; Ibn al-ʿImrānī, *Inbāʾ*, 76; al-Ḥuṣrī, *Zahr*, 1088–1089. Instead of Abū l-Ghūl the protagonist in these versions is an unnamed Bedouin of the tribe of Bāhilah.

4 Muḥammad al-Amīn and ʿAbd Allāh al-Maʾmūn, sons and successors (in that order) of Hārūn al-Rashīd.

5 *Qubbah* also means "dome, cupola"; I chose "pavilion" to fit better with wood and tent ropes.

that. You are an able poet and what was said about you is false."[6] He rewarded him with ten thousand dirhams and a robe of honour.

Admired is also his poem on Dāwūd ibn Yazīd ibn Ḥātim al-Muhallabī, in which he says,[7]

This river had not been crossed except by
one anxious about its terror, or a reckless one;
But now it is a trivial matter for those seeking your generosity,
as if there were well-constructed bridges over it.

This poem is one of the best of those that were composed for Dāwūd, who was a liberal man, praised by a number of modern poets.

[150] Admired are also the following verses:[8]

When the wind breathes from the direction of my beloved,
shortly after the afternoon prayer, its breeze is sweet.
And it blows with our sorrows too, and the soul
remembers worries that came one after another;
My heart kept being pounded by the wind's blowing
and my eyes overflowed with prolonged streams,
And my whole heart yearns; passions new
and old come over me.

He composed a lot of poetry; he was one of the well-known poets whose poetry is found everywhere.

6 The present version does not mention any explicit accusations, but in other versions the Caliph doubts if the earlier poem was actually composed by the Bedouin himself.

7 Dāwūd ibn Yazīd ibn Ḥātim al-Muhallabī (d. 205/820–821) was governor successively of Ifrīqiyyah, Egypt, and Sind. Again, there is confusion, because the verses are attributed to Di'bil in Ibn Abī 'Awn, *Tashbīhāt*, 248, said to be on someone who had been appointed governor of Sind (viz., Dāwūd ibn Yazīd); and in al-Zajjājī, *Akhbār*, 141 they are attributed to Abū l-Hawl al-Ḥimyarī (who has an entry below, § 28), and addressed instead to al-Faḍl ibn Yaḥyā al-Barmakī. In al-Tha'ālibī, *Muntaḥal*, 74 they are also attributed to Abū l-Hawl. They are quoted anonymously ("by a contemporary") in Ibn al-Ṣayrafī, *Afḍaliyyāt*, 124. No more verses of the *qaṣīdah* are known.

8 Not found elsewhere.

27 ʿUmar ibn Salamah[1]

He is known as Ibn Abī l-Siʿlāʾ.[2] ʿUbayd Allāh ibn Muḥammad al-Anṣārī told me: al-Khaṣīb ibn Muḥammad told me:[3] The poets gathered at the door of al-Rashīd's palace and asked to be permitted entrance, but the Caliph did not grant this. But then he changed his mind, saying to the chamberlain, "Go to them and tell them that whoever is able to praise me in religious and worldly terms and in few words may enter." Ibn Abī l-Siʿlāʾ stepped forward and asked permission to enter. The Caliph said, "Bring him in!" and he was taken inside. "Recite to me", said al-Rashīd, "your poem 'Is it abundant rain that the camel is carrying, or does it carry Hārūn?'" The poet replied, "I'll recite what you have chosen and stipulated today!" But the Caliph said, "No, recite the verses I mentioned!" So he recited to him:

Is it abundant rain that the camel is carrying,
or does it carry Hārūn?[4]
Or is it the sun? Or the full moon?
or the world? Or religion?
O no, rather I see all
that I enumerated, joined,
On Hārūn's she-camel: [151]
may all human beings be his ransom!

1 ʿUmar ibn Salamah, known as Ibn Abī l-Siʿlāʾ has no entries in other books on poets. As is clear from what follows he died after Hārūn's death in 193/809. Ibn Abī l-Siʿlāʾ, presumably the same person, is mentioned in *Aghānī*, xiv, 129, in a report set at the time of al-Manṣūr, and xvii, 68 in another anecdote involving the poet al-ʿAbbās ibn al-Aḥnaf and al-Aṣmaʿī. See also GAS, ii, 600. He is not to be confused with al-ʿAbbās ibn al-Walīd ibn Abī l-Siʿlāt al-Kūfī, a long poem of whom is found in Ibn Abī Ṭāhir Ṭayfūr, *al-Qaṣāʾid al-mufradāt*, 122–129.

2 A *siʿlāʾ* (or *siʿlāh*, *siʿlā*) is an evil female demon; perhaps Ibn al-Muʿtazz thought it fitting to mention this poet after Abū l-Ghūl, a *ghūl* being a shape-shifting demon that entered the English language as "ghoul". The nickname of the poet in the next entry, Abū l-Hawl ("Father of Terror"), also fits in.

3 See the different account of the following in *Aghānī*, xxiii, 218–219, which mentions Yūsuf ibn al-Ḥajjāj al-Ṣayqal (on whom see GAS, ii, 615) as the poet instead of Ibn Abī l-Siʿlāʾ. Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, xix, 59–60 also attributes the poem to Yūsuf ibn al-Ḥajjāj. In yet another account in al-Ḥuṣrī, *Jamʿ*, 269, vss. 1–2 of the poem are attributed to Ibn Abī l-Siʿlāʾ. In Ibn al-ʿImrānī, *Inbāʾ*, 75–76 vss. 1–2 are said to have been chanted by an unnamed camel driver when the Caliph was on pilgrimage on camelback. In al-Aṣmaʿī's account in al-Marzubānī, *Nūr l-qabas*, 133–134, this camel driver is named as Ibn Abī l-Siʿlāʾ, reciting the poem (cf. the next passage).

4 This and the following verse use the common figure of aporia or "feigned ignorance", called *tajāhul al-ʿārif* and first listed among figures of speech by Ibn al-Muʿtazz in his *al-Badīʿ*, 62–63.

The Caliph handsomely rewarded him. The other poets gathered round him, and he divided his reward among them. It was the custom in those days that when the caliph rewarded one poet but not the others, that poet would give to them according to their ranks and status. Ibn al-Siʿlāʾ had presented himself to Hārūn in Medina, while on pilgrimage. The Caliph had left the town, heading for Mecca riding a camel. Then the poet extemporised these verses that we have quoted, in a loud voice. The Caliph gave him a large amount of money for this.

Attributed to him is also a poem for al-Rashīd when the Caliph was returning from a campaign, having been victorious and having gained booty. In this poem he says,[5]

All Muslims are delighted
by the arrival of al-Rashīd, the king!
All subjects are delighted,
both the near and the far,
{66} Between pulpits and gatherings,
with panegyrics and declamations.
Hārūn, you are a caliph
formed from nobility and generosity.
People are made of clay, but you are
the full moon in the heavenly sphere of lucky stars.
They are like the days of the months,
and you among them are a feast day.

It is a long and famous poem. Admired is also his elegy on al-Rashīd, in which he says,[6]

The Imam[7] has died and all people
are stricken by it.
His riding animals are bereft of him,
his pavilions are empty of him.

5 Not found in other sources, apart from the last verse, in al-Rāghib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, i, 187, where the poet's name is garbled as "Abū l-Saʿdā'".

6 Not found in other sources. Al-Rashīd died in 193/809 after a short illness in Ṭūs (now in eastern Iran) while on campaign against a rebel and he was buried in the town later known as Mashhad.

7 *Imām* is often used as a synonym of *khalīfah*, especially but not exclusively by Shi'ites.

His troops are left alone,[8]
his door is left without guards.
He resides in his tomb [152]
and his return cannot be hoped for.
In the grave, near the place where he alighted,
the earth is now his cover.
Fate did not fear him, causing him
to perish while still fresh and youthful.[9]
All people used to have hopes in him
and all people held him in awe.
But fickle Death withheld him,
and the time had come for the term of his record.[10]

This is also a long and widely known poem. Admired is his elegy on Hārūn:[11]

O Saturday's eve, on which
its ill-favoured stars rose:
You were al-Basūs to them,
no, you surpassed al-Basūs's evil omen.[12]
The troops returned from the campaign,
but left Hārūn behind, confined in a grave,
In a foreign land, among the people of Ṭūs.
Would that I had left Ṭūs,
As a grief for us, if we did not kill
the people when he was struck.

This, too, is a long and widely known poem. Fine verses by him in praise of Hārūn are these:

Say to the Hāshimite Imam, on whom
rests the crown of sovereignty:
You have reached with your generosity an extreme extent
of which generosity itself had fallen short.

8 Farrāj suggests reading *tafarraqat*, "are dispersed", instead of *tafarradat*.
9 Hārūn was c. 43 years old when he died.
10 The wording (*ḥāna min ajalin kitābuh*) echoes e.g. Q Āl ʿImrān 3:145: *No soul may die except by God's permission as a written term* (*bi-idhni llāh kitāban mu'ajjalan*).
11 This and the two following poems are not found in other sources.
12 On al-Basūs see above, p. 127.

Hārūn is a dazzling, brilliant full moon
by which black darknesses are cleared.

Charming are the following verses by him:

In the cortège there is a shining light
that blinds the eyes:
Are you seeing the full moon there,
or is it the Commander of the Believers,
With on his sides, left and right,
His heirs apparent?[13]

His poems are many and he is one of the excellent master poets among the moderns.

13 *Wulāt al-ʿahd*, plural, not a dual, even though the context suggests they are two. There are some reports, however, that besides Muḥammad al-Amīn and ʿAbd Allāh al-Maʾmūn a third son, al-Qāsim, was appointed as successor after al-Maʾmūn (al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, iv, 215).

28 Abū l-Hawl al-Ḥimyarī[1] [153]

Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad told me: Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Salām told me:[2] Al-Faḍl ibn Yaḥyā was angry with ‖ Abū l-Hawl because of something he had found {67}
out about him. Before that he had held a high status with him. Al-Faḍl admired his poetry and had given him splendid rewards. When he became angry with him, people began to shun the poet and to ignore him. He did not know anyone who would support him and intercede for him, so that al-Faḍl would be reconciled with him. At his wits' end, he said,[3]

There rose above us a cloud of al-Faḍl's anger
that rang with lightning and thunder.
Yet what sin have I committed to al-Faḍl ibn Yaḥyā
for which I should fear his resentment?
Grant me your good will: I do not wish for more.
May it be your opinion to revert to what I was used to from you.

When al-Faḍl read the poem, he wrote on the paper, by way of an apostille,[4] "My good will towards you is joined with my beneficence to you; you may want me to separate the two, but I shall not do so", and he sent a gift. And thus the poet, with his verses, could dispense with an intercessor.

Nice verses by him are the following, from an elegy on al-ʿAbbās ibn Muḥammad, who had been a benefactor of his:[5]

Do you think that I, after your death, rushed to pleasures,
Abū l-Faḍl, or raised the curtains to expose a young woman?

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1 ʿĀmir ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Abū l-Hawl al-Ḥimyarī, poet of Baghdad, who composed panegyric and invective poetry during the reigns of the caliphs from al-Mahdī to al-Amīn. See al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, xiv, 155–156, *GAS*, ii, 599.

2 For the anecdote see al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, xiv, 155–156; Ibn Rashīq, *ʿUmdah*, ii, 179–180; Ibn al-Ṭiqṭaqā, *Fakhrī*, 201–202.

3 Al-Khaṭīb quotes eight verses, of which Ibn al-Muʿtazz quotes vss. 1–2, 8.

4 *Waqqaʿa fihā*; see e.g. Gruendler, "*Tawqīʿ* (Apostille)".

5 He could be Abū l-Faḍl al-ʿAbbās ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī (d. 186/802), a brother of al-Saffāḥ and al-Manṣūr. In *Aghānī*, xvi, 247 the verses are attributed to al-Raqāshī (on whom see below, § 35) and said to be an elegy on al-ʿAbbās ibn Muḥammad ibn Khālid ibn Barmak (whom I have not been able to find in other sources). Followed by three more verses, the piece is also attributed to Abū Nuwās in his *Dīwān*, i, 282, not as an elegy but a poem sent to Abū l-Faḍl Jaʿfar ibn al-Rabīʿ (brother of the vizier al-Faḍl ibn al-Rabīʿ); in vs. 3 this version has *Jaʿfarun* instead of *muʾnisī*, and in vs. 1 *baʿdaka* must be taken to mean e.g. "after you abandoned me" instead of "after your death", a common idiom in elegies.

Or that my eyes would still enjoy pleasant sights,
or that I would sip from the lips of a pretty girl?
Thus my intimate friend has shunned me, day and night,
and my right hand is devoid of his noble gifts.
But I have put on a shirt of humility
and I spend the night as if Death were digging my grave.

Admired are Abū l-Hawl verses on love:[6]

There is a woman unique in beauty, matchless,
with qualities proudly superior to all qualities.
[154] Two characters she has: of blandishment[7] and arrogance,
both of which would bring life back to the dead.[8]
Also a heart that does not respond to our call,
and a glance that obligingly answers to us.
Sometimes she kills me with aloofness;
the following morning she resurrects me, exchanging glances.
Do not remind me of ritual prayer, for thinking
of your face at prayer is my Qur'an recitation.
I pray, distracted by you, not knowing,
when I pray, how many *rakʿah*s I have performed.[9]
I am struck, despite my grey hair, with love of a white antelope
whose shadow is wary of the desert's blackness.

Fine verses on love are the following:[10]

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6 Not found elsewhere.

7 Adopting, like Farrāj, Eghbal's emendation of *kh.l.q* to *malaq*.

8 Perhaps *zaffā l-ḥayāta ilā l-mamātī* should be interpreted more negatively: "would lead life unto death" (cf. vs. 4).

9 This may be meant by *kam kānat ṣalātī*. A salat consists of a variable number of *rakʿah*s (a sequence of bows and prostrations), depending on the time and circumstances.

10 Not found elsewhere except the last verse, which is attributed to Umayyah ibn Abī l-Ṣalt in Sībawayh, *Kitāb*, i, 270 (and 362, anonymously) and al-Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥayawān*, iii, 49; to ʿUmayr al-Ḥanafī in al-Marzubānī, *Muʿjam*, 72; to ʿAbīd ibn al-Abraṣ in al-Māwardī, *Adab al-dunyā wa-l-dīn*, 278; to an unnamed Bedouin in al-Balādhurī, *Jumal*, xiii, 363, al-Marzubānī, *Nūr al-qabas*, 30, Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh*, lxvii, 114–115, Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, iii, 467; and see in detail al-Baghdādī, *Khizānah*, vi, 108–119, where, in addition, several other attributions are mentioned (Abū Qays al-Yahūdī, Ibn Ṣirfah al-Anṣārī, Ḥunayf ibn ʿUmayr al-Yashkurī). This optimistic verse does not seem to fit the drift of the poem quoted by Ibn al-Muʿtazz. It is either a conscious quotation (*taḍmīn*)—Farrāj uses quotation marks—or the result of garbled transmission.

If I get from you three things
I would be (if only!) as happy as can be.
No brief visit, no kissing, no promise,
even if you do not grant us meeting!
I am passionate, enslaved by love, struck to the heart,
mad with love till the end of time.
Happy one, may you be sound of body!
Loving you has pared my body, whittled as a toothpick.
If mountains were made to carry one tenth of what I bear
of loving you, they would be certain to vanish.
"Souls often worry about something
that may be solved, like untying a shackle."

Among the poetry by him that is transmitted are these verses on a member of the Barmakid family:[11]

Now I need to be beaten,
for having asked a favour of a dog!
Abuse has given him an ugly face
and he is no longer scared by abuse.

Abū l-Hawl is one of the famous, excellent modern poets. {68}

11 The verses are ascribed to Abū l-Hawl and said to be addressed to the Barmakid vizier Jaʿfar ibn Yaḥyā ibn Khālid in al-Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān*, iii, 351 (4 vss.); idem, *Ḥayawān*, i, 260–261 (3 vss.); Ibn Rashīq, *ʿUmdah*, i, 69 (3 vss.). They are also attributed to Abū Nuwās (*Dīwān*, ii, 133–134, 3 vss., and see Wagner, *Abū Nuwās*, 57 for a German translation).

[155] 29 Nuṣayb al-Aṣghar[1]

He is known as Abū l-Ḥajnāʾ.[2] ʿAbd al-Aʿlā ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-Asadī told me: al-Hilālī, a friend of the poet Abū l-Ḥajnāʾ, told me: Al-Rashīd had appointed him as governor of one of the rural regions in Syria. He was a black man. He had gained, al-Hilālī said, great wealth as a result. Al-Rashīd preferred him to most of his poets, and so did al-Faḍl ibn Yaḥyā. The gifts from the Barmakids to him flowed uninterruptedly. Al-Hilālī said, "One day I said to al-Aṣmaʿī, 'What do you think of that black man's poetry?' He replied, 'He is in our time a better poet than ʿAbd Banī l-Ḥasḥās was in his time'.[3] I asked, 'And how does his poetry compare with that of Nuṣayb'?[4] 'They are on a par,' he answered, 'for their style is one and the same. But the one is an ancient poet and the other a modern one.'"

Among the poetry by him that we have memorised and selected is his poem on Isḥāq ibn al-Ṣabbāḥ al-Kindī:[5]

Ibn Ṣabbāḥ,[6] with Kindah around him, is like
when the full moon appears, surrounded by stars.
But the full moon wanes, whereas he
is ever full and only waxes in perfection.
You can see the eastern pulpit[7] tremble from excitement
under him, when he ascends its steps and speaks.

1 Abū l-Ḥajnāʾ Nuṣayb was called al-Aṣghar, the Younger, to distinguish him from the Umayyad poet Nuṣayb ibn Rabāḥ, called al-Akbar (the Older), on whom see *GAS*, ii, 410–411 and *EI2*, viii, 145 (Ch. Pellat); both were black. Nuṣayb the Younger (d. after 190/806) was a slave in al-Yamāmah (Central Arabia). He became a *mawlā* of al-Mahdī, who, before he became Caliph, was impressed by his poetic gifts. He freed him, let him marry a slave called Jaʿfarah, and gave him an estate. Nuṣayb also composed odes on the Barmakids and Hārūn al-Rashīd. He has entries in *Aghānī*, xxii, 359 and xxiii, 1–20; Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, xix, 234–237; Ibn Shākir, *Fawāt*, iv, 201–205; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xxvii, 97–101. See *GAS*, ii, 539, *EI3*, "Al-Nuṣayb al-Aṣghar Abū al-Ḥajnāʾ" (Ali Ahmad Hussein).

2 Al-Ḥajnāʾ was his daughter, who also composed poetry, which she recited to al-Mahdī and his daughter ʿAbbāsah (*Aghānī*, xxiii, 15, 16–17 and see al-Suyūṭī, *Nuzhat al-julasāʾ*, 28).

3 On Suḥaym, known as ʿAbd Banī l-Ḥasḥās ("the slave of the tribe of al-Ḥasḥās"), who died c. 40/660, see *GAS*, ii, 288–289. He, too, was black.

4 Meaning the older Nuṣayb.

5 See Abū Tammām, *Waḥshiyyāt*, 266 (where he is called "Abū l-Ḥajnāʾ, the *mawlā* of Hārūn al-Rashīd, Nuṣayb al-Ṣaghīr"), al-Ḥuṣrī, *Zahr*, 1029–1030. Isḥāq ibn al-Ṣabbāḥ, who belonged to the tribe of Kindah, was governor of Kufa under al-Mahdī and al-Rashīd, and the father of the important philosopher Yaʿqūb ibn Isḥāq al-Kindī.

6 A licence for Ibn al-Ṣabbāḥ, for metrical reasons.

7 The "eastern pulpit", *al-minbar al-sharqī*, is in Basra, see e.g. Abū ʿUbaydah, *Naqāʾiḍ Jarīr wa-l-Farazdaq*, 118, al-Balādhurī, *Jumal*, viii, 270.

You are the son of the best of people, except for prophethood,[8]
and, before that, you[9] were pre-eminent, the camel's hump.

It is a long and fine poem. Choice poetry by him is also his poem that spread to the horizons, some verses of which serve as fruit to lettered people and as titbits for princes in their salons, ‖ on account of the fine quality of the expressions and the motifs in it. In this poem he says,[10] [156]

With kings one finds both harm and benefits,
but I see that the Barmakids do not harm, they are beneficial.
When roots are hidden underneath the earth,
the plants rejoice and the field thrives;
But if you do not know a man's roots
or his past, then look at his deeds.

It is a long and excellent poem. Al-Faḍl ibn Yaḥyā would tell the poets, "If you compose a poem, then say something like these verses. If you compose a panegyric, then praise with something like this poem." Among his admired poetry is the following reproach:[11]

8 "The best of people" being the Prophet Muḥammad.

9 Although the singular "you" is used, this seems to refer to the illustrious and ancient tribe of Kindah.

10 *Aghānī*, v, 393 (four vss., as lyrics of a song) and xxiii, 19–20, where it is reported that it was recited to al-Faḍl ibn Yaḥyā, who liked it but had forgotten that he had already heard it before and had rewarded the poet with 30,000 dirhams. The verses are also in al-Jahshiyārī, *Wuzarā'*, 203; Ṣā'id al-Rabaʿī, *Fuṣūṣ*, ii, 300 (vss. 2–3); al-Ḥuṣrī, *Zahr*, 1030; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, iv, 35 (with a fourth verse, attributing them to Marwān ibn Abī Ḥafṣah or Abū l-Ḥajnā'). In Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh*, xxiv, 414 they are attributed to Marwān ibn Abī Khaythamah. Al-Tawḥīdī, *Baṣā'ir*, ii, 19 quotes the verses and thinks they might be by Bashshār and says that al-Jāḥiẓ quotes them in his book on camels (*al-Ibil*, lost). Vs. 1 is anonymously in al-ʿAskarī, *Dīwān al-maʿānī*, i, 34.

11 The transmission of this piece looks again confused and I mention only some of the various attributions in the sources. The parenthesised verses (7, 10) are taken from the *Mukhtaṣar* (ed. Farrāj, Appendix, 432). Vss. 1 and 8 are attributed to the Umayyad poet al-Ubayrid ibn al-Muʿadhdhar in *Aghānī*, xiii, 127–128; vss. 1–2, 4, 6, 9 are in a poem by the Umayyad poet al-Mughīrah ibn Ḥabnā' in al-Tawḥīdī, *Baṣā'ir*, i, 135. Vss. 10, 7–8 are attributed to ʿAbd Allāh ibn Muʿāwiyah ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Jaʿfar ibn Abī Ṭālib (on whom see GAS, ii, 349–350) in al-Mubarrad, *Kāmil*, i, 279 and Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, ii, 349; vs. 8 is in a poem by Sayyār ibn Hubayrah in al-Qālī, *Dhayl al-Amālī*, 73; and it is quoted anonymously in al-Khālidiyyān, *Ashbāh*, i, 205.

I find that whenever I ask for a raincloud from you
to quench my thirst, it comes as a cloud of sand and dust.
When I say, "May your sky give me shade", its showers
move to the south or to the north, away from me.
So do not expect to gain my affection,
if you with your generosity shun me.
I did my best to love you, striving for your pleasure,
and hoping to get something from you but not finding it.
It has turned my hair grey always to find an affair[12]
either falling short of me or landing behind me.
Must you put above me someone whose judgement falls short,
and who is not profitable to you the way I am?
[A benevolent eye is short-sighted towards any defect,
but a malevolent eye exposes bad qualities.]
Neither of us is in need of the other while alive,
and when we are dead we need each other even less.
I have lowered my bucket amidst many other buckets;
they came back filled, only mine stayed as it was.
[You are my brother as long as I am not in need,
but when need arises I know for sure I have no brother.]

In the following verse by him, one that is widely known, he describes a she-camel in hyperbolic terms that overstep the limit:[13]

She is the wind if you imagine her, but while the morning winds
still spend the night she is already having a midday nap.

{69} He also said,[14]

My eyes have wronged me, and have harmed themselves,
by revealing what I hid in my bosom.

12 *Mulimmah* usually means "misfortune, stroke of bad luck", which does not fit the context here. Perhaps one could read *lā yazālu mulimmuhū yuqaṣṣiru ʿannī aw yaḥullu warāʾiyā*, as the MS seems to have, instead of *lā tazālu mulimmatun tuqaṣṣiru ʿannī aw yaḥullu warāʾiyā*, as in the editions; *mulimmuhū* could then mean, e.g., "what he brings on a short visit".

13 Al-Rāghib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ii, 376, al-Shimshāṭī, *Anwār*, i, 376, with comment: "This is extravagance (*isrāf*) in the description of speed". Ibn al-Muʿtazz uses the verb *afraṭa* here; in his *al-Badīʿ* he lists *al-ifrāṭ fī l-ṣifah*, "hyperbole in description", among the figures of speech, but the verse by Nuṣayb is not among his examples.

14 Not found elsewhere.

I could no longer move, with the passion I suffer; [157]
what I harboured was not hidden and my heart puts me to shame.
O misery of one whose house is far from his dear friend!
O misery of one who in his heart is like a distant one!
My yearning increases when I approach, dreading to hear[15]
of impending separation from you, in the morning or the evening.

Abū l-Ḥajnāʾ excelled in love poetry, panegyric, lampooning, and descriptive verse, not falling short in any of these. He was especially connected with the Barmakids, who were much pleased with him and preferred him to others. Al-Faḍl bought for him a house near his own, for one thousand dinars. He also bought for him an estate that produced a rich yield. They would grant him stipends and were on familiar terms with him. Such was the custom of the Barmakid family with those close to them, may God have mercy on them! After them, no one has ever outstripped them in generosity, nobility, kindness, munificence, and beneficence.

He died after 190.[16]

15 I adopt Farrāj's suggestion of reading *tawajjusan* instead of *tawaḥḥushan*.

16 i.e., after 190/805–806; probably an addition by a copyist.

30 Rabīʿah al-Raqqī[1]

Ismāʿīl ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn M.k.r.m[2] told me: al-Madāʾinī said: Rabīʿah composed a panegyric on al-ʿAbbās ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-ʿAbbās ibn ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib in a wonderful, excellent poem, in which he says:[3]

If one said to al-ʿAbbās, 'O son of Muḥammad,
say No! and you will live forever!', he would not say it.[4]
Whichever noble quality I enumerate,
I find you to be its uncle paternal or maternal.
When princes march together in any place
they are its stars and you its crescent moon.
[158] Noble qualities had long been tied up
until with your hands you released their shackles.

Now al-ʿAbbās was a miser and he sent him two dinars, whereas the poet had hoped to receive two thousand from him. When they arrived, he almost went mad with rage. "Take these two dinars," he said to the messenger, "I hereby give

1 Rabīʿah ibn Thābir ibn Lajaʾ al-Asadī (d. 198/813–814), a blind poet from al-Raqqah, a town on the Euphrates in northern Syria, once an important border town, where he spent most of his life. He has entries in *Aghānī*, xvi, 253–265; Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, xi, 134–136; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xiv, 95–96; idem, *Nakt* (a book on blind people), 151–152; and see GAS, ii, 542–543, ix, 298. Of all poets in the book, Rabīʿah's section has the largest number of verses and Ibn al-Muʿtazz rates him very highly (and I agree with him), even though he is almost completely absent from modern western scholarship; he is not mentioned in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, the *Encyclopedia of Arabic Literature*, or the volume on *Abbasid Belles-Lettres* in the Cambridge History of Arabic Literature (see on this Heinrichs, "Ibn al-Muʿtazz", 167). But the relative neglect is ancient: Abū l-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī says that Rabīʿah's remoteness from Baghdad and lack of contact with other poets caused him to remain obscure (*Aghānī*, xvi, 254). It may also explain why his usual *nisbah* refers to a place rather than to his Arab tribe. His poetry has been collected by Zakī Dhākir al-ʿĀnī (Rabīʿah al-Raqqī, *Shiʿr*) and al-Najjār (*Shuʿarāʾ*, II, ii, 275–298).

2 Vowelling uncertain (Mukarram, Mukram).

3 *Aghānī*, xvi, 256–257 (as lyrics of a song); Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, xi, 134–135; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xiv, 95–96; idem, *Nakt*, 151; Rabīʿah al-Raqqī, *Shiʿr*, 52–53 (with a fifth verse). Vss. 1, 4, 3 in al-ʿAskarī, *Dīwān al-maʿānī*, i, 105, attributed to Abū l-ʿAtāhiyah. For the subsequent lampoon and the following events, see the same sources and Rabīʿah al-Raqqī, *Shiʿr*, 35–36.

4 Meaning that al-ʿAbbās was so generous that he would never say no. As Ibn al-Muʿtazz says, this was far from true. Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿah, *ʿUyūn*, ii, 361 (tr. iii, 364) relates that this verse was improvised by a poet (identified by Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿah as al-Rabīʿah al-Raqqī) when al-ʿAbbās entered his house; the physician Jibrīl ibn Bukhtīshūʿ, hearing this, said, "I could not contain myself, for I knew that al-ʿAbbās was the meanest sod of the age, so I called out to the poet, 'That was irony, wasn't it? You said "say No"; but you really meant "say Yes"; didn't you?' Al-ʿAbbās smiled grimly, and then said to me, 'Leave this house, God's curse on you.'"

them to you, on condition that you return the note to him and put it into his inkwell without him noticing!" "I'll do that", said the man. Rabīʿah took the piece of paper and wrote on it,[5]

> I praised you as one praises an embellished sword,
> so that you would count as a noble man, like myself.
> Now, given that the praise turned out a total loss,
> I have lied about you and I have gone too far.[6]

The messenger did what he was told. When al-ʿAbbās found the two verses he was angry and immediately went to see al-Rashīd, being the paternal uncle of his father. Al-Rashīd had intended to marry his daughter[7] and he honoured and respected him. When al-Rashīd saw al-ʿAbbās's surly face he said, "Uncle, what is the matter?" "Commander of the Believers, this Rabīʿah al-Raqqī has lampooned me!" The Caliph exclaimed, "Damn this son of a stinking female![8] Lampooning my uncle, the person dearest to me?!" He summoned Rabīʿah and when he was present al-Rashīd almost burst with anger. "You son of a stinking woman!" he said, "You dare to be impudent to me? Then your head will be off!" The poet said, "Commander of the Believers, listen to my story and you'll find my excuse; and if not, then do as you intend, and shedding my blood will be ‖ {70} lawful to you!" Thereupon he recited his panegyric on al-ʿAbbās. "What do you think of it?", he asked the Caliph, who replied, "Caliphs have never been praised with anything as good as that!" The poet continued, "Commander of the Believers, I received two dinars for it from him. I donated them to his messenger and wrote those two verses." When al-Rashīd heard this he was embarrassed and hung his head. He wanted to have a closer look at the ode and said, "Bring it to me!" Al-ʿAbbās was ashamed and knew that he had made a mistake. ‖ Al- [159] Rashīd said to him, "I have asked you to bring it to me, didn't I!" Al-ʿAbbās told his servant to bring it. The Caliph had a good look at it and admired it. "Have you really rewarded him with two dinars?" he asked al-ʿAbbās, who remained silent. "I say, tell me the truth, Raqqī!" he said to Rabīʿah, who answered, "Commander of the Believers, I swear by your life, I got two dinars and I gave them to

5 This suggests that he was not totally blind, or that this happened before he became blind.

6 The other sources add a third verse: "For you are a man who does not fulfil his promises, | and when I praised you, in fact I elegised you."

7 There are no records of such a marriage; *Aghānī* and other sources remark that the Caliph gave up his intention as a result of this event.

8 A common insult, see *WKAS*, *Lām*, 431–432; *lakhnā'* is sometimes interpreted as "uncircumcised" or "not clitoridectomised".

his servant." The Caliph looked at al-ʿAbbās disapprovingly. "Shame on you!" he said, "You have disgraced yourself and your ancestors!" Al-ʿAbbās, mortified, did not answer. Then al-Rashīd gave orders for Rabīʿah to be given thirty thousand dirhams,[9] and to be made a boon companion. He was also given a robe of honour and two suits.[10] When Rabīʿah was about to leave, the Caliph said, "Rabīʿah!" "At your service, Commander of the Believers!" "Take care not to mention him again in your poems!"

A poem by him that travelled to the horizons and became known as if it were a proverb is his panegyric on Yazīd ibn Ḥātim, in which he lampoons Yazīd ibn Aslam al-Sulamī:[11]

> What difference there is between the two Yazīds in generosity,
> Yazīd of Sulaym and the brilliant Ibn Ḥātim!
> Yazīd of Sulaym is a friend of money, but that fine man of al-Azd
> is not friendly towards wealth:
> That Azdī man is bent on annihilating his money,
> while the Qaysī man is concerned with amassing dirhams.
> That stammerer[12] should not think that I lampoon him,
> but I merely prefer people with noble qualities.

As for his love poetry, this is superior to the poems of all his contemporaries and to many of those who lived before him. I cannot find anyone whose love poetry is more natural and sounder than Rabīʿah's.[13] He said,[14]

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9 Poets are more often rewarded with (silver) dirhams, than with (gold) dinars, one dinar amounting in theory to ten or twelve dirhams, but in practice to twenty or more.

10 A "suit" (*ḥullah*) is a set of two or three garments (see Lane, *Lexicon*, ḤLL).

11 Al-Mubarrad, *Kāmil*, ii, 237 (vss. 1, 3–4); Ibn Qutaybah, *Adab al-kātib*, 431 (vs. 1a); Ibn Dāwūd, *Zahrah*, 581 (vss. 1, 4); Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, i, 306 (vss. 1, 3–4), v, 305; *Aghānī*, xvi, 254 (six vss.); Ibn Rashīq, *ʿUmdah*, ii, 173 (vss. 1, 3–4); Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, xi, 134 (vss. 1–3); al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xvii, 96 (vss. 1, 3). On Yazīd ibn Ḥātim al-Muhallabī (d. 176/793), governor of Egypt, see Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, vi, 321–326, where sixteen verses of the poem are quoted (p. 323); and see ii, 306–307 (eight vss.). Yazīd ibn Aslam is an error for Yazīd ibn Usayd ibn Zāfir (governor of Armenia), on whom see al-Balādhurī, *Jumal*, xiii, 317–318. See also Rabīʿah al-Raqqī, *Shiʿr*, 59–61 (18 vss.), with more references.

12 He was a *tamtām*, as confirmed by al-Balādhurī.

13 Compare *Aghānī*, xvi, 255: "ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Muʿtazz mentioned him, saying: Rabīʿah's love poetry is better than that of Abū Nuwās, because in Abū Nuwās's love poetry there is much insipidness (*bard*), but Rabīʿah's poetry is sound, easy, and sweet."

14 For this poem (Rabīʿah al-Raqqī, *Shiʿr*, 45–47, al-Najjār, *Shuʿarāʾ*, II, ii. 290–291) as well as the following poems by Rabīʿah, Ibn al-Muʿtazz's book is the only source, except for a few odd verses.

I am disobedient to the Merciful,
in being mad about Rukhāṣ,[15]
And to all people,
the near and the far.
Rukhāṣ, in al-Karkh,[16] is a gazelle
who is unreachable to me.
A long time have I spent at the doors [160]
of al-Khuraymī, tracking her,[17]
Eager to catch a refractory
and slippery gazelle,
Who is harder to catch than
predators or bustards.
O Rukhāṣ! Rukhāṣ of al-Karkh, the girl
with braids in her hair,
And teeth bright as lightning
that glitters in the cumulus clouds,
And a behind like a sand-hill,
and a slim waist:
I will always be importunate[18]
and argue that you are the best.
I do not care if people upbraid me
because of you, or detract from me.
But you have tormented my soul;
when will I be saved from you?
Fear God on account of us,
beware the Day of Retaliation:
An event on which one will be seized
by the feet and the forelocks![19]

15 Farrāj and the editor of Rabīʿah's poetry have Rakhāṣ, but the dictionaries (e.g., al-Fīrūzābādī, *Qāmūs*, al-Zabīdī, *Tāj*) specify that Rukhāṣ (meaning "soft-bodied") is a woman's name.

16 Al-Karkh (from Aramaic *karkhā*, "fortified town"), when unqualified, is usually the large quarter of that name in Baghdad, but it is also found in connection with other places. Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, mentions seven further places, including Karkh al-Baṣrah and Karkh al-Raqqah; the latter may be meant here.

17 The identity of al-Khuraymī, perhaps the master of Rukhāṣ, is unknown. He may be the poet Abū Yaʿqūb al-Khuraymī, a contemporary who lived in north Syria and Baghdad, see below, §55. However, unvowelled in the MS, the name could also be read as e.g. al-Khuzaymī or al-Ḥarīmī.

18 *Unāṣī*, literally, "I grasp (people) by the forelock".

19 Q al-Raḥmān 55:41, on the Last Day: *The sinners* (…) *will be seized by the forelocks and the feet*.

Ask[20] about the poets among people
if they ever dived as deeply as I!
I have composed poetry that brings down
white-footed mountain goats from impregnable heights.[21]
Pretty women lead men astray,
fond of being hunted by me;
[161] They have recommended to one another being loved by me:
What a wonderful recommendation!
Many an open-handed drinking companion,
bright-faced, a sinner,
A man of Quraysh,
of the Banū ʿAbd Manāf, among the remnants (?),[22]
Who freely spends his goods,
holding them cheap,
Who wastes his wealth on pleasures
but whose retaliation is feared,
Had his wine poured for him, and for me too,
by a singing-girl with braids in her hair,
From jugs made of silver,
not jugs made of lead.
And with us is a dark skin, like
an African black, the legs extended.[23]
That means disobeying God;
Acts of disobedience are my concern!

This, as you can see, is smoother than water and sweeter than honey. Admired is also the following poem:[24]

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20 Following Farrāj's suggestion in a note, I have rearranged the order of the verses.

21 This echoes a verse from Imru' al-Qays's *Muʿallaqah* describing a storm ("sending the white wild goats hurling down on all sides", Arberry, *The Seven Odes*, 66). The image is also used figuratively, as in a poem by Suwayd ibn Abī Kāhil: "She called me with her enchantments—verily she would bring down therewith the white-legged [wild goat] from the mountain-top", *Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, 192 as translated by Lyall, *The Mufaḍḍalīyāt*, 141.

22 ʿAbd Manāf is the branch of Quraysh to which the Prophet Muḥammad belongs. I do not understand *fī l-ʿanāṣī*, ("among the remnants"). *ʿAnāṣī*, pl. of *ʿunṣuwah* or *ʿinṣiyah*, means "scattered remains" or "hair at the side of the head". The text in al-Najjār, *Shuʿarā'* has *fī l-manāṣī*, which is also obscure to me.

23 A goatskin full of wine; cf. above, pp. 204, 206.

24 Rabīʿah al-Raqqī, *Shiʿr*, 36–37, al-Najjār, *Shuʿarā'*, II, ii, 288–289.

My friend, I will never sober up {71}
from loving Dāḥ.[25]
[Love of Dāḥ] has become an arrow[26]
in my ravished heart.
My heart inclines to her
(my heart tends to incline),[27]
And, in loving Dāḥ, it disobeys
every censurer and vilifier.
Would that I could send
jinnee messengers to her, or winds,
To convey my needs, who then
would return with success!
Dāḥ, Dāḥ, Naṣr's darling,[28]
ah, ah, how I love you!
I swear to God, I am killed
for your sake, though without wounds.
Not with a sword you killed me,
no, nor with dark spears,
You are someone who kills people [162]
with passion, not with weapons,
And with flirting, dalliance,
coquetry, and jesting,
And with two predatory eyes
and teeth like chamomile.
I wish I were a dove
of yours, with clipped wings!
People, leave me alone!
I am not one of those successful people:
I am a human being who is tormented
by a passion for those who are sickly and sound.[29]

25 Dāḥ is an unusual woman's name, and also an unusual noun with several meanings (a kind of toy, a kind of perfume, a bracelet of twisted cords, an embroidered cloth …).

26 The bracketed words have been added by Farrāj to restore the sense and the metre. Instead of reading *qadḥan* ("slander, defamation"), as vowelled in all editions, I prefer reading *qidḥan* ("arrow").

27 Instead of *janaḥa … dhū janāḥī*, Farrāj suggests reading *jamaḥa … dhū jimāḥī*, "(My heart) runs away …, (my heart) tends to bolt".

28 Naṣr (ibn Nuṣayr, cf. vs. 18) is presumably her master.

29 A loved one is often described as having languishing, sickly looks.

I am one who likes talking to pretty women,
a friend of entertainment and wine;
But I will never enter
the door of debauchery.
The abode of Ibn Nuṣayr
is a treasure-trove of white, attractive women:
There lives Dāḥ. But in loving Dāḥ
surely there is no sin.
And there is, besides Dāḥ, another girl,
full of play and jesting,
For whom I have braved
the terror of the night and barking dogs.
We were alone with a young girl,
slender in her sash;
I touched[30] the white belly-folds
of the plump, beautiful woman.
Then, when the cock crowed
before dawn broke,
I said, "Crow, cock, a thousand times!
This is not the time to leave,
Unless I see the morn break, even though
the morning will expose me!"

This is as natural as poetry can be and as smooth as speech can be. Charming is also the following poem:[31]

Ghunmah,[32] dissolve the pledged attachment,
upon your life, and have mercy with the sad lover!
[163] Rabīʿah is madly in love with you
and yearns for you longingly.
He presented himself to you as a visitor
but you have bestowed madness on your visitor.

30 I follow Farrāj's suggestion of reading *lamastu* instead of *labistu*.

31 Rabīʿah al-Raqqī, *Shiʿr*, 67–69, al-Najjār, *Shuʿarāʾ*, II, ii, 296–297.

32 The text has ʿAthmah (thus also in another poem by Rabīʿah, in *Aghānī*, xvi. 263), but I follow Eghbal's suggestion; compare the two poems below, where the beloved is called Ghannām(ah) or Ghunmah (meaning "booty" or "gain"). In undotted and unvowelled Arabic script ʿAthmah and Ghunmah look identical, so it is likely that only one person is meant.

He saw you coming, and when {72}
his eyes saw you, you roused temptation for us.
You stood up, swaying heavily—my eyes remember
how with your beauty you would sway on the rough ground.[33]
When people saw you they said,
"Exalted is God, Lord of all beings!"
Your haunches appeared, high rising:
haunches that leave people bereft of religion.
Your Lord has given you—so thank Him!—
beauty surpassing all that people could describe.
The sun that sends light in a day of gloom is not more beautiful
than you on a day you appear in a plain dress.[34]
When you approached you thrilled people with your beauty,
and when you retreated you shackled their eyes.
If princes saw you one day, they would
fall down, prostrating themselves for your beauty.
If women were able to command, then you
would be the Commander of Believers.[35]
You have been given heavy haunches and you have
been burdened with what you cannot carry;
When you want to stand up, we imagine a sand dune
holding you back from standing and making you sit down.
When you perform the salat and prostrate yourself,
we say, "Oh, would that she would be prostrate for years!"[36]

Charming, too, is the following poem; but all his poetry is charming, sweet, natural, excellent, and easy:[37]

Dove, convey a greeting from me
to a loved one to whom I cannot speak,

33 Like Eghbal, I do not understand *fī l-ḥuzūn*.

34 *Tabadhdhala* means "not to care about honour or reputation", but here it is taken to be a synonym of *ibtadhala*, "to wear a *bidhlah*, clothes for service or work".

35 The masculine form is used, *amīr al-muʾminīn*; the metre (and perhaps propriety) forbidding the feminine, *amīrat al-muʾminīn*. It could be argued, however, that *amīr* (having a passive sense, equivalent of *maʾmūr*, cf. Wright, *Grammar*, i, 186) does not need a feminine ending and could therefore refer to a woman.

36 I cannot help being reminded of a very indecent anecdote involving Muṭīʿ ibn Iyās, his friends, and a singing girl (*Aghānī*, xiii, 326).

37 Rabīʿah al-Raqqī, *Shiʿr*, 62–66, al-Najjār, *Shuʿarāʾ*, 11, ii, 293–294.

And say to the one who is angry with us,
Why? And wherefore, my cause of comfort? Why?
Do you cut me off, abandoning me,
though we did not wish to cut you off because of your cutting off?[38]
I did not abandon you because I dislike you,
but you went to your Iraq and I went to Syria.[39]
[164] 5 I am unable to visit you, because I see that my home
and your home cannot be reconciled,[40]
And all your family said unkind things to me
and they rebuked me; and I cannot stand being rebuked.
Noble men before me have loved
their dear ones, who in turn loved noble men:
Jamīl and al-Kuthayyir loved,
and ʿUrwah met his death by his passion.[41]
They set the rules of passion and love before me
and I do not find anybody who blames them.
10 Ghannāmah,[42] my eyes and my ears!
Loving you, from the beginning, has made me ill.
You aimed at my heart, when you shot me,
with the arrow of love (love has arrows).
I tried to restrain my heart, away from you, but it did not obey me
and was all the more resolved to be in love.

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38 Tentative translation of *a-fī hijrāni bayniki taṣrimīnī | wa-mā rumnā li-ṣurmikumū ṣirāmā*.

39 All three editions read *ḥalaltu ʿIrāqakum wa-ḥalalti Shāmā* ("I went to your Iraq and you went to Syria"), which is not impossible (the MS is unvowelled), but I think the reverse, reading *ḥalalti … ḥalaltu*, is more plausible. It could refer to the poet's return to his native al-Raqqah, after Caliph al-Mahdī had made him come to Baghdad (*Aghānī*, xvi, 254). The 2nd-person suffixes of *ʿIrāqakum* and *ḥalalti* seem to go together, and he says (vs. 21) that he has loved her since he was a boy, presumably when both lived in al-Raqqah.

40 Instead of *ʿidīnī an azūraki inna dārī* ("Promise me that I can visit you; my home …)", which seems illogical, I follow Farrāj's suggestion of reading *ʿadānī an azūraki anna dārī* …

41 Three poets known for their love and love poetry: Jamīl ibn Maʿmar (d. 82/701) for his love of Buthaynah; Kuthayyir ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān (d. 105/723, here with the article for the sake of the metre) and his beloved ʿAzzah; and ʿUrwah ibn Ḥizām (d. 30/650 or later), who died of love for his cousin ʿAfrāʾ (not ʿUrwah ibn al-Ward, as incorrectly in an editorial note in Rabīʿah al-Raqqī, *Shiʿr*).

42 She is called Ghunmah in vs. 23; cf. the preceding poem. Though vowelled Ghannāmu in the editions, perhaps one should read it as Ghannāma, a shortening (often found in verse and called *tarkhīm*) of the feminine ending, standing for Ghannāmatu (Ghannāmah), which looks more normal than the masculine Ghannām. Ghannāmah is a playful change, turning Ghunmah ("booty, gain") into a "woman taking booty".

When I said, "Desist! Think no more of her!",
it shrank back all the more from cutting you off.
If I were not tempted by you (you should know it!),
then Rabīʿah would perform the ritual prayer and keep the fast.
Love—love of you—has stayed in my heart
and love of me has stayed in your heart.
We are both tenderly, ardently in love with each other
and suffering, not wishing anything forbidden.
I love what she says, she loves to be near me,
though we meet only briefly.
If only day were night,
and dawn would never light up the dark!
Would that doves could be tamed {73}
so that we could send doves with our letters![43]
Perhaps a dove would bring us
a letter from you that we would make a model;
And it would convey love from a lover
whose heart has loved you since he was a young lad.
What is my sin? Love of you has stirred it.
If a sandgrouse were to be left alone, it would doze off and sleep.[44]
If only you saw Ghunmah one day, when she has
uncovered her head and lowered the veil from her face,
Her sash hanging on a willow twig [165]
and her gown on a heaped-up sand-dune![45]
When she smiles, you would think that her teeth
are a flash of lightning illuminating the darkness;
She reveals sweet hailstones with the smell of Mecca balsam,[46]
as if there were musk or vintage wine on them.

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43 The homing instinct of pigeons was known. They were trained for pigeon racing (Rosenthal, *Gambling*, 52–55) and they were also used for sending letters (see al-Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥayawān*, iii, 285–286); but it may be that regular pigeon post was not developed until after Rabīʿah's time. I use the more poetic "dove" instead of "pigeon", but in Arabic *ḥamāmah* is used in poetic and non-poetic language.

44 Cf. the proverb "If a sandgrouse would be left alone at night it would sleep" (Abū ʿUbayd al-Bakrī, *Faṣl al-maqāl*, 384–385, al-Maydānī, *Majmaʿ*, ii, 207–208), said when one is forced to act against one's will.

45 The twig is her slender upper body, the sand-dune her ample hips.

46 *Bashāmah*, *Amyris opobalsamum* (thus Lane, *Lexicon*) or *Commiphora opobalsamum*, *Commiphora gileadensis*, Mecca Balsam or Balm of Gilead.

But the Mecca balsam does not increase the fragrance of your mouth:
it is you who sweeten the Mecca balsam.
A brown gazelle, feeding on green herbage,[47] tending
her young, approaching it, sounding a soft lowing,
Is not more beautiful than you, the day you departed,
leaving us, while your tears soaked your veil,
With a mule under you, adorned with a saddle,
swift, pulling at the reins …
All love is idle talk, except my love;
it has destroyed my inside and pared my bones.

Considered charming and transmitted everywhere among connoisseurs—because Rabīʿah's poetry is not much found with the common people—is also the following:[48]

I divert myself concerning you with promises and wishes;
why should I not divert my heart with despair about you?[49]
A promised meeting with you is clarified honey, so sweet,
but before its fulfilment lie wormwood and colocynth.
I allow my eyes to look at others than you,
wary of enemies (though my eyes are more inclined to you),
So that people will say, "Anyone who accuses Rabīʿah
of bad things regarding Laylā is spreading falsehood;
Slanderers have lied about them, unjustly,
and both are innocent and sensible."
If I were sensible, I would decide to break with you;
but I am a man who is not sensible.
How could my heart bear to be without you? (There's no "how"!)
My heart's door is locked against breaking with you.
Why is killing you forbidden (There's no "why"!),
while killing me, Umm Laylā, is allowed to you?[50]

47 Reading *jāziʾatun* (cf. Lane, *Lexicon*, ج ز ء: *ẓabyah jāziʾah*, "a doe-gazelle that is satisfied with green, or fresh, pasture or herbage") instead of *juʾdharahā* (Farrāj, followed by other editors), which does not resemble the word in the MS.

48 Rabīʿah al-Raqqī, *Shiʿr*, 50–51, al-Najjār, *Shuʿarāʾ*, II, ii, 291–292.

49 This verse, with minor changes, is found in a poem attributed to Majnūn Laylā (*Dīwān*, 168).

50 It is unclear why Laylā (vs. 4) is called Umm Laylā here; they are obviously the same woman.

Has it deluded you that I cannot bear anything except wanting you,
and that I cannot depend on anyone except you?
When it became clear to you that I loved you [166]
and you were certain that I would never swerve,
You wronged me, like the bad wolf, who once upon a time
said to a lamb he saw—the wolf was starving, without food—[51]
"Are you the one who reviles me for a crime I did not commit?"
The lamb said, "When was that?" "Last year", he said.
"I was born this year; you intended to be treacherous!
Eat me then, may your food not do you good!"
Do you cry because I am killed? It is clearly you who killed me
by my love of you, there's no question about it!
You are like the one who has a habit of slaughtering birds
with his eyes dripping with tears, being so fond of them.[52]
If he had any pity or mercy upon them,
he would restrain his hand that never stops slaughtering.
So do not look at tears shed by the eyes, but look {74}
at what the hand does with the birds!

As one can see, the like of this, in delicate love poetry, has never been heard. Charming, too, is the following poem:[53]

Suʿād secretly sent an unsuspected messenger,[54]
a woman servant. She came, surreptitiously.
The messenger brought a letter with its seal,
and that page contained magic, written with a pen;

51 This refers to an ancient fable about a man who raises a wolf cub on sheep's milk; when grown up, the wolf kills the man's lamb. For many references, see Marzolph, *Arabia ridens*, ii, 26, idem, *The Arabic Fable*, 107 and see the proverb anthologies s.v. *aẓlam min dhiʾb* ("more unjust than a wolf"), such as Ḥamzah al-Iṣbahānī, *Durrah*, i, 294–295 and al-Maydānī, *Majmaʿ*, i, 559–560 (in both sources vss. 11–13 are quoted anonymously). See also Brockelmann, "Fabel und Tiermärchen", 105.

52 See al-Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥayawān*, v, 238–239 (where the hunter's tears, caused by the cold, are misinterpreted by the birds); see also Brockelmann, "Fabel und Tiermärchen", 108–109 and Marzolph, *The Arabic Fable*, 92. However, in a verse by Dīk al-Jinn (d. c. 235/850) the tears may be crocodile tears: "… Like the hunter of birds, who laments | them, while he slaughters them with his blade" (*Aghānī*, xiv, 59).

53 Rabīʿah al-Raqqī, *Shiʿr*, 53–58, al-Najjār, *Shuʿarāʾ*, 11, ii, 294–296.

54 My translation happens to have even more sibilants than the Arabic (*Dassat Suʿādun rasūlan* …).

It contained love-seduction, which she kept concealing
to the ignorant, though it was not hidden to the intelligent.
I understood what she had kept hidden, so I wrote to her,[55]
intimating with a few clear words: a "No" and a "Yes".
She wrote, "Come whenever you want, covertly!
It is up to you, you decide, Raqqī!
Be bold, Rabīʿah (you'll be most welcome!)
on a moonless night, exploit the darkness!"
So I visited her, keeping my eyes on my feet,
wrapped in two robes of darknesses.[56]
Then there happened what happened, nobody knew about it.[57]
I did not sin[58] and did not indulge in anything forbidden.
And Suʿdā[59] visited you. But Suʿdā is now far from you;
she has kept you sleepless and has not visited you from nearby.
[167] Your phantom, Suʿdā, is welcome to visit us briefly,
a phantom that travels without the help of star or road mark.
You'll be my bedfellow, when I am asleep, in my dream;
and the star will be you, when my eye does not sleep.
The eye and all dreams are such liars!
Can my dream be true, once, in being with her?
Say yes! Yes is necessary, if you say it!
She said, "Perhaps!" and "perhaps" is a bridge to "yes".[60]

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55 Here and in the next verse the verb "to say" is used for what clearly refers to writing.

56 A real robe and the night, as in vs. 37 of the next poem. Since the poet is said to have been blind, one could think this "darkness" is meant, but in this verse and on several other occasions he uses visual imagery and speaks about his eyes as if they can see; cf. above, p. 49 on Bashshār.

57 See above, Introduction, p. 6 on the often-quoted verse from a poem on wine and love by Ibn al-Muʿtazz: "Then there happened what happened; I shall not mention it. | Think the best of it and do not ask about it"; and see a similar verse by al-Ḥusayn ibn al-Ḍaḥḥāk, below, p. 390.

58 I follow Farraj's suggestion of reading *wa-mā jtaraḥtu* instead of *wa-mā jaraḥtu*.

59 Suʿdā sounds like a variant of Suʿād. However, vs. 16 could imply that it is another woman, and it is even possible that in vs. 31 yet another woman is introduced. Most *ghazal* poems are about only one woman (or young man), but polyamorousness is not altogether absent; see also his poem about Dāḥ, above.

60 This verse is quoted in ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī, *Dalāʾil*, 79, and it is this version I have adopted, following the edition by al-ʿĀnī (*Qūlī naʿam, wa-naʿam in qulti wājibatun | qālat: ʿasā, wa-ʿasā jisrun ilā naʿamī*), as it makes more sense than *Qūlī naʿam, innnahā in qulti nāfiʿatun | laysat ʿasā wa-ʿasā ṣabrun ilā naʿamī*. Al-Jurjānī admires the metaphorical "bridge".

You have given us happiness, which I shall never deny
until I shall be put away, buried in a grave.
My heart is ill, the malady of love has made it ill,
but if you wished you could cure my heart of its disease.
"Your heart", she said, "is divided between several pretty women.
I do not need a heart from you that is divided.
You are easily bored, having exchanged me for another.
You have shortchanged me and you bought baseness for nobility.
I had sworn an oath that I'll be absolved from loving you; but
my oath was untrue, though I swore a solemn oath.[61]
I ask God's forgiveness! My heart has become soft, though
between us, Raqqī, there are no bonds of kinship.
I wish that those who blame us for our love would try it themselves,
for if they tasted what I have tasted, they would not blame us.
Love is a grave malady for which there is no medicine
except the sweet breath of a loved one,
Or a kiss, gained by stealth from a mouth
—it is not forbidden to press your mouth on a mouth![62]
That would be forbidden to those who count it a venial sin,
but the Merciful will not punish us for a venial sin."[63]
My heart, in its going astray, is madly in love with Suʿdā;
would that my heart, Suʿdā, was not madly in love with you!
It is you who bequeathed to my heart the love for her,
as an inner malady and an uninterrupted yearning.
You are created from musk, while other people are created
from sticky mud and dark dry clay.[64]
God never formed a human being like your form,
after Joseph, among Arabs or non-Arabs.[65]

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61 The MS seems to have *qad kuntu aqsamtu annī min hawāka fa-mā | b.r.y* [*?*] *yamīniya qad aghlaẓtu fī l-qasamī*. Farrāj reads *birrī yamīniya*, Eghbal suggests *barrat yamīniya*, and al-Najjār suggests *barrā* (licence for *barraʾa*) *yamīniya an*; but both the syntax and the sense remain unclear to me and my translation is merely guesswork.

62 One could take *mā ḥarāmun* as a question, as does the translation in Ullmann, *Der verstohlene Blick*, 99.

63 See Q al-Najm 53:32. It is not certain where Suʿdā's speech, begun in vs. 17, ends and perhaps Rabīʿah's words begin already in vs. 20 or 21.

64 See e.g. Q al-Ṣāffāt 37:11 (*We have created them from sticky mud*) and al-Raḥmān 55:14 (*He created mankind from dry clay*).

65 Joseph/Yūsuf's beauty is proverbial; see the story with the woman known in English as

[168] Your upper body is made of a straightened, brown spear-shaft,
and your dress lies on top of a heaped sand-dune.
You are a garden of sweet, fragrant herbs
or a meadow watered by downpours and continuous showers,
{75} Or an egg in the sand, or a pearl that came
out of a swelling, foaming sea with clashing waves.
When I touched the Kaaba's corner I met a beautiful woman,
radiant, with bright cheeks, like an idol,
With a quivering behind and a slender waist,
walking unhurriedly, like a drunken toper.[66]
Her female servants[67] say, when her posterior, behind her,
makes her sit down, "You have come to the corner, so touch it!"
So she touched it. Then she stood up for a short while, saying a
prayer.
I, too, stood up and prayed; but for her I would not have stood up.
When at last she left, I greeted her and she turned round.
"You", I said, "are my concern and my craving!"
"And who are you?" she said. Her female retinue explained:
"This is Rabīʿah, troublemaker[68] among the nations!
This is the tormented man whose love poems[69] have reached you.
Cover yourself with a mantle and darkness![70]
This devil of his nation has found you while on pilgrimage, so
seek protection from God from the devil!"

Potiphar's wife and her female friends, who exclaim, *This is no human being! He's a noble angel!* (Q Yūsuf 12:31).

66 The MS and the edition have *al-shāribi l-thalimī*; but *thalim* ("nicked, blunted"), duly glossed by the several editors, does not give an acceptable sense, and I have assumed that *thamil* is meant, either an error of the poet or intentionally altered, for the sake of the rhyme (or even to imitate drunken speech). See, for instance, al-Aʿshā, *Dīwān*, 57 (*al-shāribu l-thamilū*); Anon. in Lane, *Lexicon*, ʃʿʟ (*nahḍa l-shāribi l-thamilī*, "… as stands up the intoxicated drinker").

67 I follow Farrāj, who read *qaynātuhā* instead of *fityānuhā* "(her young men") as the MS seems to have; Eghbal's suggestion (*fatayātuhā*) is unmetrical.

68 Among the meanings of *fitnah* are "temptation, charm, trial, disturbance, sedition, civil strife".

69 *Manāsib*, pl. of *mansibah*, "poem containing *nasīb* (love poetry)". Ibn al-Muʿtazz regularly uses *ghazal* for "love poetry"; *nasīb* is usually but not exclusively reserved for the amatory, elegiac introduction of polythematic poems.

70 Farrāj glosses *qatam* as *ghubār* ("dust"), which seems strange; but it also means "darkness" (cf. Anon. in Abū Tammām, *Ḥamāsah* = al-Marzūqī, *Sharḥ*, 331–332: *wa-naḥnu ka-l-layli jāsha fī qatamih*).

"I seek refuge", she said, "with my Lord from you!" and she hid herself
behind a young woman with soft hands, like red berries.[71]
I said, "You have betrayed our rights and God's covenant!
A perfidious traitor will not be true to what is due!
Didn't you say Yes?" "Yes, I did," she said, "but misguidedly;
one cannot blame someone for being misguided!
We have repented, we fasted, we prayed to our Creator,
but you have not repented from sins nor did you fast!"
Then I blamed myself for bestowing my love on her
and I blamed her stinginess. I gnashed my teeth in regret.
May God remove and crush a person
who "loves you forever" but does not make it last![72]

Also admired are the following verses:[73] [169]

My two friends, this is Laylā's abode, so tie up
your camels, then weep and have fortitude!
Stop, and help me, God bless you,
but if you will not, then sit down!
Or else, go away and leave me with my lamenting, so that I can say
to the two open spaces[74] at the remains of the abode: Help!
They replied, unwilling to stay there any longer,
"Perhaps you will forget and be firm!
Bear up with it! You have harassed us and detained us
at the abode's remains for a day without stopping."
My friend, foolishly, blamed me for loving Laylā,
but I do not deserve to be rebuked for my passion.
Upon my life, O Laylā! Though Laylā is far away,
she has caught my love-struck heart.
She kills with her eyes, she hunts with her flirtation,
and kills young men only intentionally.

71 Literally, "like *ʿanam*", a plant (not identified) with red fruit; a reference to fingers or hands dyed with henna.

72 Needless to say, the quotation marks are not in the original, but the irony is implied.

73 Rabīʿah al-Raqqī, *Shiʿr*, 41–43, al-Najjār, *Shuʿarāʾ*, II, ii, 286.

74 I am not certain of the sense of *li-janābay dimnati l-ḍari*; *janāb*, here in dual form, means "side; courtyard; abode". Abandoned dwellings are often addressed in poetry, but they rarely reply, and the subject of "they replied" in vs. 4 must be the two companions.

Ah, how lovely Laylā was, with her female friends, who
had promised you a meeting with her and them!
They came, in groups of three or four
or two, walking unhurriedly, swaying,
Treading on silk dresses, which got muddy,[75]
and dragging along thin, striped[76] clothes on their bodies.
When we met they said, "Hello, welcome!
Come along and let us find a comfortable dell to sit in!"

Choice verses by Rabīʿah are also the following:[77]

"Ghunmah, give me back my distressed, love-struck heart
before you are required to pay bloodwit or suffer retaliation!
You have enslaved me with your flirtation that kills me,
and you have shot at my liver without missing it.
{76} ‖ Though you may kill me thus, unjustly and without retribution,
[170] you will not escape from my tribe, the Banū Asad!
My heart, that is something you have taken away;
it will not harm you not to make my body sick.
You are my passion and my soul's desire and delight:
I say this without concealing it from anyone.
You have got beauty, your flirtation is pretty and marvellous,
and you can only be called the Gazelle in town.
You are sweet in hot summer, cool
in winter, and warm on a cold night!"
She makes her bedfellow sip saliva from her lips,
from a cool mouth with teeth like hailstones.

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75 *Yalḥaquhā l-ḥamā*. Eghbal's suggestion, *yulḥifnahā l-ḥamā*, is rejected by Farrāj, who suggests *yalḥaquhā l-janā*, and who thinks *janā* could mean "shells" here, decorating the dresses. But much better is assuming that *ḥamā* is a normal kind of licence for *ḥamaʾ*, "mud".

76 *Muʿammadan*; Farrāj suggests reading *mughammidan*, "covering", but Eghbal is surely correct in explaining *muʿammad* as *ʿalā hayʾat al-ʿamūd*, "shaped with columns"; cf. al-Buḥturī, *Dīwān*, 1800, on embroidery that is *bayna muʿammadin wa-muhallalī* ("column-shaped", i.e., with straight stripes, "and crescent-shaped", i.e., with curved stripes).

77 Rabīʿah al-Raqqī, *Shiʿr*, 39–40, al-Najjār, *Shuʿarāʾ*, 11, ii, 287. Not found elsewhere, except vs. 1, quoted anonymously in Ibn Jinnī, *Munṣif*, iii, 55, where the woman is called Misk instead of Ghunm(ah). For a Dutch translation see Bouazza, *Schoon in elk oog*, 398 (placing the poet wrongly in the 7th century instead of the 9th). I have put vss. 1–7 between quotation marks, in view of the shift from 2nd to 3rd ps. in vs. 8.

Would that I could be alone with her before I die,
on a mattress between the curtains and the bedstead,[78]
When she makes her right hand and bracelet my pillow,
and the wristband of her left arm on my arm!
Every day we would briefly visit you,
if only your house were close to mine!

78 On the expression *bayn al-sijfi wa-l-naḍad* see e.g. al-Baṭalyawsī, *Sharḥ al-ashʿār al-sittah*, i, 217, on a verse by al-Nābighah al-Dhubyānī (*bayna l-sijfayni wa-l-naḍadī*), al-Jāḥiẓ, *Burṣān*, 45 (a verse by Abū l-Dahmāʾ: *bayna l-sijfi wa-l-naḍadī*).

31 ʿAlī ibn Jabalah, Known as al-ʿAkawwak[1]

Muḥammad ibn Yazīd al-Mubarrad told me: ʿAlī ibn al-Qāsim informed me: ʿAlī ibn Jabalah said,[2]

"I often visited Abū Dulaf. He would always receive me cheerfully and I would always leave him carrying his kind gifts. After this had happened many times, I kept away from him for some days, because I felt embarrassed. He sent his brother Maʿqil to me, who said, 'The Emir asks: Why do you avoid me and stop seeing me? If you find that I have been remiss in the past, then forgive me and we shall mend our ways in future, and give you more, as you wish!' Then I wrote a note to Abū Dulaf with these verses:

I have avoided you, but not being ungrateful for the gracious gifts:
could one hope to receive yet more with ungratefulness?
But when I came to you as a visitor,
and you were so excessively generous, I was unable to thank you.
[171] So from now on, I shall merely come to greet you
and visit you one day every two months or once a month,
And if you lavish yet more gifts on me, I'll only shun you more,
so that we'll never meet while we are alive until the Day of Resurrection!

When Maʿqil saw these verses he liked them; he was erudite, even more so than Abū Dulaf, and he was a poet.[3] 'Well done!' he said to me, 'By God, that is well

1 Abū l-Ḥasan ʿAlī ibn Jabalah (d. 213/828), known as al-ʿAkawwak (an unusual word probably meaning "stocky, short, and fat"), was descended from a family of *mawālī* in Khorasan. Blind from childhood, he is known mainly for his panegyric poetry on al-Maʾmūn and two military commanders, Ḥumayd ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd al-Ṭūsī (d. 210/825) and Abū Dulaf al-Qāsim ibn ʿĪsā al-ʿIjlī (d. 225/840 or the following year), himself a poet (see *EI2*, iv, 718–719, "al-Ḳāsim b. ʿĪsā" [J.E. Bencheikh], *GAS*, ii, 623–633). This Abū Dulaf is very often mentioned in Ibn al-Muʿtazz's *Ṭabaqāt*. The report that al-Maʾmūn, angered by hyperbolic praise of him, had al-ʿAkawwak killed, is deemed probably untrue by Ibn al-Muʿtazz. Al-ʿAkawwak has entries in Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 864–868; Ibn al-Jarrāḥ, *Waraqah*, 113–116; *Aghānī*, xx, 13–42; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, xiii, 280–281; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, iii, 350–354; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xx, 470–473; idem, *Nakt al-himyān*, 209–210; Ibn Faḍl Allāh, *Masālik* (ed. al-Jubūrī), xiv, 600–605. See also *EI2*, i, 315–316, "al-ʿAkawwak" (R. Blachère), *EI3*, "al-ʿAkawwak" (Reinhard Weipert); *EAL*, 78–79 (G.J.H. van Gelder); *GAS*, ii, 572–574, ix, 302. His extant poetry has been collected by, among others, Ḥusayn ʿAṭwān (ʿAlī ibn Jabalah, *Shiʿr*).

2 See al-Mubarrad, *Rawḍah*, 185–186; *Aghānī*, viii, 256–257 and xx, 24–25; ʿAlī ibn Jabalah, *Shiʿr*, 120. The verses have also been ascribed to Diʿbil, see his *Dīwān*, 335–336; al-ʿAskarī, *Dīwān al-maʿānī*, i, 127; al-Khālidiyyān, *Ashbāh*, i, 182–183.

3 See *GAS*, ii, 633; for a few verses by him see *Aghānī*, xxi, 92–93.

said! The Emir will surely admire these thoughts!' He took them to Abū Dulaf, who liked them and who wrote to me:[4]

Many a guest arriving in the evening, whom I welcomed
and received cheerfully before regaling him hospitably,
Came to me, hopefully, and never was there anything that stood in the way
of a banquet and boons given by me.
I merely drew him close to me, beginning with being cheerful
and honouring him with one gift and another.
I bestowed on him money, which may be expected to be depleted,
but he bestowed on me a panegyric that will last forever.

He sent these verses to me together with a servant and one thousand dinars." That was when ʿAlī ibn Jabalah composed his brilliant ode that became famous among Arabs and non-Arabs alike, in which he says,[5]

This world is merely Abū Dulaf,
both desert dwellers and sedentary people;
When Abū Dulaf leaves,
the world also leaves, at his heels.

Ibn Abī Jarīr al-Zaʿfarānī told me: When al-Maʾmūn heard what ʿAlī ibn Jabalah had said on Abū Dulaf:[6]

All Arabs on earth, {77}
whether Bedouin or sedentary,

4 The reply has the same metre and rhyme as al-ʿAkawwak's verses.

5 The following two verses are often quoted; see e.g. al-Jāḥiẓ, *Burṣān*, 134–135; al-Mubarrad, *Rawḍah*, 186; Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 864; Ibn Abī Ṭāhir Ṭayfūr, *Baghdād*, 171, 203; Ibn al-Jarrāḥ, *Waraqah*, 115; Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, i, 307, ii, 166; *Aghānī*, xx, 15, 22, 24, 25, 36, 39; al-ʿAskarī, *Dīwān al-maʿānī*, i, 50; Anon., *Akhbār al-Barāmikah*, 94 (anonymously). They are also among the 31 verses of the poem quoted in *Aghānī*, xx, 19–21 and the 15 verses in viii, 254–255; see ʿAlī ibn Jabalah, *Shiʿr*, 65–70 (53 vss.) and see 126 for numerous references (to which one should add al-Shayzarī, *Jamharah*, 454–456, with 50 vss.). When someone suggested to the poet that he had taken the unusual metre (*madīd*) and rhyme (*-arih*) from a poem by Abū Nuwās in praise of al-ʿAbbās ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Jaʿfar (see Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān*, i, 139–152), ʿAlī ibn Jabalah retorted that he had taken it in fact from a poem by the pre-Islamic Imruʾ al-Qays (*Dīwān*, 123–127), as told in Ibn al-Jarrāḥ, *Waraqah*, 115. See, however, vs. 9 below. The poet Ibn ʿUnayn (d. 630/1233) was unable to decide which poem was better, that by Abū Nuwās or the present poem (Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, iii, 351).

6 They are vss. 35–36, 31–32 of the poem in ʿAlī ibn Jabalah, *Shiʿr*, 68.

Borrow nobility from you, with which
they clothe themselves on a day of vaunting.
This world is merely Abū Dulaf,
both desert dwellers and sedentary people;
When Abū Dulaf leaves,
the world also leaves, at his heels …

he fumed with rage, saying, "Damn this son of a so-and-so! He claims that all nobility we know is borrowed from Abū Dulaf!" He sent for him, but the poet
[172] fled to al-Jazīrah.[7] The Caliph sent letters to seek ‖ and detain him. When he was taken to the Caliph and stood before him, al-Maʾmūn said, "You son of a stinking female! You said about al-Qāsim ibn ʿĪsā: 'All Arabs on earth, | whether Bedouin or sedentary, || Borrow nobility from you, with which | they clothe themselves on a day of vaunting.'" The poet replied, "Commander of the Believers, I referred to people in the same category as Qāsim and those like him. As for you and your kin, God has made you and them superior to all His servants, because only to them has He given superiority, prophethood, the Holy Book, and wisdom. He has in addition given you the office of being caliph, of ritual prayer performed in your name, and sovereignty." He kept trying to conciliate the Caliph until in the end he was forgiven. Some transmitters of reports, Ibn Abī Fanan among them,[8] say that, instead, the Caliph had him killed, saying, "It is not on account of those verses that I find it permissible to shed your blood, but I do so because of your unbelief and temerity towards God, since you equate a lowly human with the Lord of All Beings, when you say,

You are the one who allots to days their stations
and who moves Fate from state to state.
You only have to extend your glance to someone
to decree his livelihood and his destiny."

The Caliph then gave orders for his tongue to be pulled out from its root, and then he was killed. But in my opinion the first account is more trustworthy; ʿAlī ibn Jabalah died a natural death. Here is the poem:[9]

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7 North Mesopotamia, between the Euphrates and the Tigris.

8 Aḥmad ibn Abī Fanan has an entry below (§109). For the following see *Aghānī*, xx, 41–42, where he is the transmitter. The two verses are quoted in many sources; see also Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 866; *Aghānī*, viii, 255; al-ʿAskarī, *Dīwān al-maʿānī*, i, 28; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, iii, 353; ʿAlī ibn Jabalah, *Shiʿr*, 96 (in a poem of eight verses).

9 The long ode on Abū Dulaf mentioned before (ʿAlī ibn Jabalah, *Shiʿr*, 65–70), of which Ibn al-Muʿtazz quotes vss. 1–34, 40–53.

He[10] chased away those who came to drink from the well of error,
and he desisted from it, though amusement was his aim.
The laughter of his grey hair only
wished to give him dignity.[11]
My regret is for youth that has passed
in which I never reached the full extent of joy.
Its days are ended in peace;
I did not stir up war with its vicissitudes.
Its happy smile has been removed from my face [173]
and its ripe fruits have dried up.
My ear listened to its rebuker
and it was not grieved to be rebuked.[12]
When my hand disobeys with its force
it will not see revenge from an avenger.[13]
Youthful folly is wealth;[14] I made the rounds with it
and gained intimacy with shy women.
With my name its pastures were grazed (?)[15]
and those engaged in nightly conversation followed my night.[16]
Of many a man jealously guarding his property
have I taken his property, safe from his caution,
And I have shed the blood of many a young gazelle[17]
who did not want bloodwit for its shedding;
At night it offered me its vulnerable parts,[18]
calling me "my dear", despite its shyness.

10 The poet means himself, or rather his poetic *persona*, in a conventional prelude about the loss of youth and youthful folly.

11 For "laughter" as a common metaphor for grey hair, see Diʿbil's famous verse quoted before, p. 109.

12 Translation of *wa-la-mā* (or *li-mā*?) *tashjā li-muzdajarih* (or *li-muzdajirihi*?) uncertain.

13 Farrāj thinks that this verse might be better placed after vs. 10.

14 *Sarḥ* is explained by Farrāj as "tall tree" or "cattle" or "riches" (assuming that *al-f.nā'* in Farrāj's note is an error for al-*ghanā'*). The *Mukhtaṣar* has *sharkh*, "prime time", which seems to go well with *ṣibā*, "youthful folly", but *masāriḥ* in vs. 9 fits in with *sarḥ*, "cattle".

15 I do not understand *tarʿawī bi-smī masāriḥuhū* and have assumed that *tarʿawī* ("desist from error, mend their ways") is a corruption of e.g. *turtaʿā*.

16 This, if correct, is rather obscure, but it seems to confirm that the poet was aware of Abū Nuwās's poem mentioned in note 5 above, the opening verse of which ends with *lasta min laylī wa-lā samarih* ("you have no part in my night and its nightly conversation").

17 The "young gazelle" is a young woman. This verse is quoted by al-Jāḥiẓ, *Burṣān*, 134.

18 Instead of *maqātilahū*, Ibn Abī Ṭāhir Ṭayfūr, *Baghdād*, 173 has *marāshifahū*, "its lips to sip from".

{78} But something came between me and youthful folly
that put my bowstring on the arrow's notch.
Neighbour girl![19] Youth does not belong to someone
who walks stooped with old age.
Things I used to do have gone;
my self-restraint has turned them.[20]
She visited me, reviling me. I said to her,
This behaviour does not suit you![21]
Enough of this from you to someone with high hopes,
to whom eyes are too weak to behold!
Riches lie behind a mountain,[22] rugged ground
over which reddish camels will slowly walk,
[174] Trying to outpace one another at night, hurriedly,
clothed in the dust from their strutting.[23]
Long have they wandered[24] in dark nights,
releasing the dawn from the last portions of the night,
Their soles chipped,
just as sparks are chipped from the fire.
Leave the gifts of Qaḥṭān and Muḍar
in their Yemen or their Muḍar,[25]
But praise a man from Wā'il,[26]
who is, of all refuge in the wide world, the refuge.

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19 For *jāratā* see the verse by Abū l-Shamaqmaq, above, p. 186.

20 I read (with *Aghānī*, xx, 20 and ʿAlī ibn Jabalah, *Shiʿr*, 15), *ṣārahā ḥilmī ilā ṣawarih* instead of *ṣārifan ḥilmī ilā ṣuwarih*.

21 Translation of *madhhabun mā anti min suwarih* uncertain. Abeer al-Abbasi (personal communication) suggests reading *su'arih* (from *su'rah*, "remainder, remnant"), but I do not see how this fits in.

22 "A mountain", *jabalan*, alludes to the province called al-Jabal or al-Jibāl, ancient Media, where Abū Dulaf's family had large estates. See also vs. 30 below.

23 Farrāj and ʿAṭwān explain *al-mays* as "large trees", which I do not understand; I have taken it as a verbal noun of *māsa*, "to strut" (said of women or camels).

24 After the future tense in vs. 18 (*sa-takūsu*) there is a shift to the past.

25 Qaḥṭān stands for the Southern Arabs (as does Yemen), Muḍar for a large section of the Northern Arabs (unlike Yemen/al-Yaman it is not a place name, as the phrasing seems to suggest).

26 For Abū Dulaf's lineage see Ibn al-Kalbī/Caskel, *Ǧamharat an-nasab*, i, Tab. 158; his tribe, ʿIjl, is part of Bakr ibn Wā'il, which belongs not to Muḍar but to Rabīʿah, another section of the Northern Arabs. ʿIjl, incidentally, "had a reputation for niggardliness" (*EI2*, iii, 1022–1023, "'Idjl" [W. Montgomery Watt]).

Fatal destinies lie in his cavalry detachments,[27]
gifts lie in the courtyard of his chambers.
He has overwhelmed the world with his largesse,
and he has steadied the Faith after it stumbled;
A king whose fingers flow with generosity
just as a meadow smiles, showing its flowers,
With a rain-shower of donations,
shining like a rain-giving asterism.[28]
Good fortune[29] has knitted together his affairs in him [175]
when it did not stand up on its rugged ground;
He took care of them, taking the burden upon himself,
his strength[30] never weakening.
A mountain, mighty on all sides,
on whose passes ʿAdnān is secure.[31]
This world is merely Abū Dulaf,
both its denuded parts[32] and the sedentary.
When Abū Dulaf leaves,
the world also leaves, at his heels.
I do not know what to say to him,
except that the earth is under his protection.
O earth's cure if it goes bad!
Protector of prosperity against distress!

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27 The text, like *Aghānī*, xx, 20, has *manāqibihī*, either "his merits, or virtues" or "his mountain-passes"; *Aghānī*, viii, 254 has *maqānibihī*, either "his (lion's) claws" or "his cavalry detachments". I have opted for this; compare a verse by Qaʿdān ibn ʿAmr: *Fī jaḥfalin li-l-manāyā fī maqānibihī | makāminun bayna rāyātin wa-aʿlāmī* (Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh*, xlix, 344).

28 See above, p. 145 and note 19, p. 218 and note 17.

29 ʿAṭwān and al-Ṭabbāʿ read *jidd*, "seriousness, diligence", as in the *Mukhtaṣar*, instead of *jadd* (Farrāj), which besides "good fortune" also means "grandfather, ancestor". One notes that the good fortune of the family depended "on an accident of birth, in that Abū Muslim [who was instrumental in establishing the Abbasids] (…) first saw the light in the house of ʿĪsā b. Maʿḳil, brother of Idrīs, the grandfather of Abū Dulaf" (J.E. Bencheikh, in *EI2*, iv, 718). The sense of the second hemistich is not clear to me.

30 *Quwā mirarih*: the singular forms *quwwah* and *mirrah* both mean "strength", but *quwā* also means "strands of a rope" and *mirrah* means "twisted rope"; the words could be connected to the "knitting" (*ʿaqd*) in vs. 28. For this metaphor and the link with *amr*, "affair", see Bravmann, *The Spiritual Background*, 51–52.

31 ʿAdnān stands for the Northern Arabs.

32 Instead of *bādīhi*, as above (p. 251) the text has *muʿrāhu* here; the *Mukhtaṣar* and *Aghānī*, viii, 254 have *maghzāhu* and ibid. xx, 20 has *mabdāhu*.

Many a man feeling secure in a stronghold
have you filled with fear at night, in his stronghold;
Many a fearful man hiding inside a thicket
have you safely rescued from his thicket;
Many a marching army, with its processions,
clamorous and multitudinous like the Day of Resurrection,
Have you led, when Death was lurking
in its sturdy horses and thicket of spears.
[176] [Jīlūyah ended up with the hand of its might having
folded up his outspread arrogance.][33]
You visited him with cavalry with glowering looks
that brought misery to his own abode.
They went out under their banners
like birds leaving their nests.
You let the horsemen[34] loose on his courtyard
and provided a banquet for the birds from his slaughtered remains.
You turned with them to al-Nuʿmān[35]
and straightened his crooked, proud inclinations.
Al-Nuʿmān had despised their pure intentions
but you turned his turbidity to purity again.
[He drank a cup in the evening
but soberness was not made to prevail over his drunkenness.][36]
{79} And you turned war's millstone on Qurqūr
in a battle that blunted the edge of his boastful exulting.
You patiently allowed him to live,
but he rejected the destiny that was imposed on him.
He waxed insolent; in the end you set up for him
a design that made him a horrid memory.

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33 This verse is not in the MS but added by Farrāj from the *Mukhtaṣar*; it is also in *Aghānī*, xx, 21 (a version of which I adopt the reading *yadun* instead of *wa-qad*, to give a subject to the verb *ṭawat*). Eghbal, in his Notes et Variantes, 21–22, quotes al-Iṣṭakhrī, *Masālik*, 144–145, about a local potentate in the region of Shiraz and Iṣṭakhr, called Jīlawayh (or rather Jīlūyah), who had killed Abū Dulaf's brother Maʿqil and was himself killed by Abū Dulaf. Jīlūyah's severed head, stuck on a spear, was used as a trophy by Abū Dulaf's family, carried in battle.

34 I adopt Farrāj's suggestion, reading *al-khayla* instead of *al-layla*.

35 Not identified.

36 This verse is taken from the *Mukhtaṣar* (ed. Farrāj, Appendix, 433).

Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Muẓaffar said: An old man of the Banū ʿIjl who belonged to the family of Abū Dulaf said to me:[37]

This Qurqūr was a brigand who acted as a highway robber in Abū Dulaf's district. He was a bold and valiant man, no one could hold his own against him. He had robbed a considerable amount of money that was sent to ‖ Abū Dulaf [177] from one of his territories and he had killed some horsemen in charge of the money. Abū Dulaf attempted in vain to have him apprehended, because the man never stayed in one place: whenever he was reputed to be in one location in the morning, he would be elsewhere in the evening. For a long time all Abū Dulaf's stratagems failed. Qurqūr would mostly rob on his own, accompanied only by a couple of servants. One day Abū Dulaf went out hunting. When in pursuit of some game, he got cut off from his companions. Arriving at the bend of a mountain, out of the blue Qurqūr came upon him, riding a noble horse, on which he traversed the earth. When Abū Dulaf saw him, he was badly taken aback, for he was alone and even horsemen such as Abū Dulaf would be no match for him. He knew that if he fled from him he would perish. So Abū Dulaf went for him, shouting, "Hey men! On the right, on the right!" Qurqūr thought that there were some horsemen with him, hiding in an ambush. Surprised, he fled. Abū Dulaf pursued him and planted a spear into his back, leaning on it until it exited from Qurqūr's chest, bringing him to the ground. Then he dismounted and cut off his head, which he brought back, mounted on a spear, to al-Karaj.[38] ʿAlī ibn Jabalah refers to this event with his verse, "He waxed insolent; in the end you set up for him | a design that made him a horrid memory." It is said that Abū Dulaf's spear was carried by two men to al-Karaj.

The following verses are also from this poem:[39]

Whichever of your two days[40] is attributed to you,
glory lights up from either.
If you had an oblique shot at Fate, [178]
your hands would make a breach in its stone.
God has moulded you, Abū Dulaf,
in the form of the best of His creations.

37 See also the version in *Aghānī*, xx, 21–22.

38 Al-Karaj, the seat of Abū Dulaf's family, lies near Hamadhān; see Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, s.v.; *EI2*, iv, 598.

39 In ʿAṭwān's edition these verses, numbered 38–39, 37, 35–36, come between vss. 34 and 35 of the version above.

40 A common motif in panegyric on men of power is their combining a "day of might" (against enemies) and a "day of beneficence"; see also below, p. 261.

All Arabs on earth,
whether Bedouin or sedentary,
Borrow nobility from you, with which
they clothe themselves on a day of vaunting.

These verses about Abū Dulaf travelled far like the sun and the wind. The poet received a lot of money for them.[41]

Abū l-ʿAbbās ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Muʿtazz says: Ibn Razīn told me: ʿAlī ibn Jabalah was born blind. But others say that he became blind as a young child.[42] Abū Ḥafṣ al-Baṣrī[43] told me: When ʿAlī ibn Jabalah had composed a panegyric on Ḥumayd al-Ṭūsī and was given permission to enter and recite it to him, Ḥumayd said to him, "Have you any praise left to say on anybody after you said on Abū Dulaf: 'This world is merely Abū Dulaf, | both its denuded parts and the sedentary. || When Abū Dulaf leaves, | the world also leaves, at his heels'?" The poet replied, "May God make the Emir prosper! What I have composed on you is even better." "What did you compose?" Then ʿAlī recited:[44]

The world is merely Ḥumayd
and his prodigious favours.
When Ḥumayd leaves,
then say goodbye to the world!

{80} [179] Ḥumayd smiled without saying anything. All those present marvelled ‖ at his excellent extemporising, for they were aware that he had improvised it on the spot. Ḥumayd richly rewarded him and gave him a life of opulence. But while the two verses on Abū Dulaf were known to high and low, the two on Ḥumayd did not become popular like the others; they are transmitted only among erudite people and the elite.

The following poem was presented by ʿAlī ibn Jabalah to Ḥumayd al-Ṭūsī on the day of Nayrūz, an occasion on which people would spend much on all kinds

41 In *Aghānī*, xx, 22 it is related that Abū Dulaf gave him 100,000 dirhams, but later tearfully regretted not having made it 100,000 dinars, which still would not given him his due (this sounds like a gross hyperbole).

42 In *Aghānī*, xx, 14 it is said that he lost one eye as a result of smallpox and another eye a few years later, playing with other boys, when it was hit by an almond.

43 He has an entry below, § 124.

44 Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 864; Ibn al-Jarrāḥ, *Waraqah*, 116; *Aghānī*, xx, 36–37; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, iii, 352; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xx, 471; idem, *Nakt al-himyān*, 210; ʿAlī ibn Jabalah, *Shiʿr*, 105.

of presents.[45] Ḥumayd was pleased with it and said, "I swear to God, I like it better than anything I have been given on this day!".

The remains of the abode are obliterated,
no one is left there to give protection.
The abodes have faded
like lines of writing that have faded.
Parting has been allotted to them, evenly,
by evenings and mornings,
And tranquil nights, when no one was awake
in nocturnal conversation.
They folded up the tribe's tents
as a cloth is folded.
They were dragged away by a galloping,
restive horse of parting and absence.[46]
You would give your eyes for the camel litters
of the tribe, the parting still far away,
Like the tops of the palm trees, [180]
swayed by the west wind.
Black-eyed gazelles are left behind at the abode,
after the black-eyed ones were loaded on camels,
These replaced by those, there,
by time revolved and revolving;
Shy they are, prone to flee,[47]
not raised in women's quarters.
For tiring my camels,[48]
criss-crossing like woof and warp,

45 *Nawrūz*, in Arabic often *nayrūz*, the Persian New Year's Day (in Spring), was also celebrated in Arabic-speaking regions. The present poem (see ʿAlī ibn Jabalah, *Shiʿr*, 58–63) is an early example of many Arabic congratulatory poems on the occasion.

46 Tentative translation, relying mostly on Farrāj's suggested emendation (*fa-stajarrat'hum qarūnun* …) instead of the corrupt MS reading (*fa-stajarra bihim f.d.w.t*) or ʿAṭwān's text (*fa-stajarrat'hum fa-dawwat*). Instead of *qarūnun* one could also read *qadhūfun* ("fast she-camel"), as suggested by Nefeli Papoutsakis (personal communication).

47 Adopting Farrāj's reading *mustajfilāt* instead of *mustakhfilāt* of the MS; as an alternative he suggests *mustakhlafāt*, "left behind as replacement (of the women)".

48 Reading, with the MS and Farrāj, *wa-bi-mā aʿtasifu*, to be connected syntactically with *iʿdhalī*, "rebuke (me)!" in vs. 15. Instead of this unusual enjambment one could read, with ʿAṭwān, *rubbamā aʿtasifu*, "Often I tire …".

To visit a firm-breasted young woman
concealed by curtains,
When eyes in the house were turned down
and neighbours were good people,
Rebuke me, woman! Foolishness
from an old man is a big thing.
Your eyes were intimate with mine,
but the first grey hairs would not have it,
And left me and your friends with nothing
that a jealous kinsman might fear.
So lie down as long as your eyes
are drowsy; sleep is in large supply!
Now turn to[49] a strong she-camel,
with its saddle on it and its straps,
Linking wastelands with wastelands
just as rope-strands are twisted,
[181] With sandgrouse that I tried to outstrip
to the waterhole, under cover of the night,
When no light of dawn
was scattered yet around it,
Riding swift camels, pared down
by their fast pacing,
To Ḥumayd! Ḥumayd is
a luminous moon on earth.

Abū l-ʿAbbās [Ibn al-Muʿtazz] says: I have never heard a finer transition from
{81} the amatory introduction to the panegyric,[50] with the excellence ‖ of its motifs.

If Ḥumayd were the protector of the world
no one would be poor in it:
A king, both of whose hands
overflow with gifts.

49 Eghbal reads the MS as *fāqa l-ḥasrah* and emends it to *qaliqu l-jasrati*, which is adopted by Farrāj (who reads the MS as *fa-atā l-jasrah*) and ʿAṭwān. But the emendation looks awkward and the context seems to demand an imperative, with the poet addressing himself, reading e.g. perhaps *fa-ʾtiya l-jasrata* (as a licence for *fa-ʾti l-jasrata*).

50 He calls it *al-takhalluṣ min al-nasīb ilā l-madḥ*. In his treatise on figures of speech (Ibn al-Muʿtazz, *Badīʿ*, 60) he uses the more inclusive phrase *al-khurūj min maʿnā ilā maʿnā*, ("moving from one motif to another"); the verse by al-ʿAkawwak is not among his examples.

His two Days on earth
  are Good Tidings and Warning,
Alone in reaching the summit,
  which no proud man's efforts can reach.
Anyone who tries to explore
  the horizon will be exhausted.
It is enough for him that he is a deep sea
  with whom other seas try to vie;
A liberal man who plunders his own wealth
  but one who cuts with his sword.
One who rides the back of any plan
  such as any bold man might fear.
Ḥumayd is guaranty for the earth
  and thus is the earth's guardian,
With a hand that milks two udder teats: [182]
  it may give life and it may destroy;
A hand in which money is restless[51]
  and with which abundant riches are distressed.
A man of al-Ṣāmit,[52] risen to the summit of glory,
  grown in pure ancestry.
Praise is due to him in his beginnings
  and praise is due to him at the end.
Other people are impure, but in pure nobility[53]
  there is no impurity.
He is quick in giving,
  parsimonious with dread.
God has never made a mighty protector
  to seek refuge with, besides him.
Abū Ghānim,[54] "Gainer" of gain
  for anyone asking for provision,
And Man of Safety, when hearts
  are oppressed by fear!

51 Farrāj reads *yughlaqu*, but suggests *yaqlaqu* in a note, adopted by ʿAṭwān and by me.

52 Although Ḥumayd is usually given the topographical *nisbah* al-Ṭūsī (he was in fact from Marw rather than Ṭūs), he belonged to al-Ṣāmit ibn Ghanm, a branch of Ṭayyiʾ (Ibn al-Kalbī/Caskel, *Ǧamharat an-nasab*, i, Tab. 257).

53 Unlike Farrāj and ʿAṭwān I adopt Eghbal's emendation of *al-nayl* to *al-nubl*.

54 Abū Ghānim is Ḥumayd's teknonym; the verse plays on the name (*ghānim al-ghunm*).

In you the earth's cornerstone is firmly anchored
and on you the realm's millstone revolves.
You are a protector of the realm
and God is a protector to you.
Many an army, its squadrons tightly packed together,
that deceived the deceiving foe about you[55]
(The comfort of blessings and undiluted power
had made him arrogant;
He joined one perfidy to another,
raiding and marauding),
You led with the cavalry
on a day when leading cavalry was good judgement.[56]
[183] Many a ranked armed force covering
the earth, steadily marching,
Their steps … the white swords (?)[57]
and a forest of entangled Khaṭṭī spears,[58]
And … for death …
widows … (?)[59]
Just as a mountain wraps
itself with streaks of rain-cloud,
You left to the birds assembled together
where the foe lay slain,[60]

55 Farrāj takes *al-gharūr* ("the deceiver") to be the Devil. In my translation the army described is that of the patron, to be connected with *qudtahū* ("you led it") in vs. 48. Alternatively, it is the enemy's army, in which case vss. 46–47 are not a parenthesis.

56 Translation tentative. I follow Farrāj's suggestion of reading *qawd* ("leading") instead of *qayd* ("shackling"). Instead of *qudtahū bi-l-khayli* Nefeli Papoutsakis suggests reading *qudtahū bi-l-ḥabli*, "you have led (it) by the rope", i.e., "you subdued it" (personal communication). *Zūr* is glossed by ʿAṭwān as *ṣaʿb*, "difficult", but according to the lexicons it means "falsehood" or "strength of judgement".

57 Meaning of *taṣilu l-bīḍa khuṭāhū* unclear. Perhaps instead of *bīḍ* ("white swords") one should read *bayḍ*, "helmets", being trampled by the victors (as suggested by Nefeli Papoutsakis).

58 Spears are often said to be from al-Khaṭṭ, a place in eastern Arabia.

59 Meaning of *wa-yunāḥī* (*yunājī, yunādī, tunādī, tanādā, tanāṣā?*) *fihi li-l-maw- | ti ayāmā tamūrū* (unmetrical!) is wholly unclear (ʿAṭwān has *wa-tamūrū*, emending the metre). I do not know why Farrāj suggests reading *athāfī* ("stones supporting a cooking-pot") instead of *ayāmā* ("widows").

60 Following Farrāj's suggestion, reading *jāʾat* instead of *sāʾa*. Birds of prey feasting on the slain are often mentioned in battle scenes.

Their blood was shed, sticky
or bubbling.[61]
You are the light of the dawn, {82}
and there is nothing wrong with dawn!
All glory comes from your glory
and returns to you.
The generous dew from your hands is a sea
from which all seas are split off.
Everyone with long-lasting glory
falls short compared with your endeavour.
A little of your favours
is much to all people.
May you live as long as Time
is counted in years and months!

Among ʿAlī ibn Jabalah's love poetry the following verses are admired:[62]

Shaklah's pledges truly satisfy me,
if something prevents my meeting with Shaklah.
Her leaving me only increases my fondness of her
and even trivial talk about her makes me glad.
Whenever someone blames me for loving her
he merely inspires my heart with love, and the blamer takes pity.
From whichever side one examines the beauties of her face, [184]
a crescent moon appears, dazzling the eyes.
Her anklets are distressed on her plump legs,
and I am deeply[63] distressed by what the blamer says.

Choice verses by ʿAlī ibn Jabalah are the following:[64]

You refused and did not help,
you were unjust and unfair!

61 Reading, with Farrāj, *al-ṣā'iku* and *wa-l-naʿīrū* instead of *al-ṣā'ilu* and *wa-l-ʿatīrū*.

62 ʿAlī ibn Jabalah, *Shiʿr*, 97.

63 Tentatively connecting *ʿamdan* with the verb *ʿamadahū*, "it grieved him", even though the corresponding verbal noun is *ʿamad*, not *ʿamd*.

64 ʿAlī ibn Jabalah, *Shiʿr*, 86–87. The transition in vs. 9 from the amatory introduction to the panegyric on Ḥumayd is abrupt. The poem is likely to have been much longer originally, but abrupt transitions are not uncommon.

You swear that you love me
but you break your oath.
Ties with you are untied
and your love is a curious thing!
You abandon me, trusting.
Trust me then, I am close to death from love!
I shall feel for you though you
do not soften or feel for me.
I'll be silent and not complain,
knowing what you know.
You have surpassed the furthest of desires
and your figure cannot be described;
Its lower parts heavy,
and what is above that slender.
Ḥumayd Abū Ghānim
possesses the most eminent eminence;
His noble traits increase
while his wealth perishes,
Stingily guarding his honour,
prodigally spending his money.
Under his wing he guarantees
that everyone on earth is protected.
Qaḥṭān prides itself on him,
Khindif prides itself on him,[65]
And now, with him, Ṭayyi' rises
above all other tribes.

Fine, too, are the following verses on Ḥumayd:[66]

By obeying God you have excelled all people,
and by advice of a Guide, a Trustee of the realm, and a Trustworthy one:[67]
Ḥumayd, you who divide worldly goods with your gifts,
and whose sword divides the perfidious from the faithful!

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65 Qaḥṭān stands for the Southern Arabs (to whom Ḥumayd's tribe, Ṭayyi', belongs); Khindif, part of the Northern Arabs, is a large tribal confederation.

66 The five verses in *Ṭabaqāt* are here combined with the five bracketed verses from the same poem in the *Mukhtaṣar* (ed. Farrāj, Appendix, 433), as they are in ʿAlī ibn Jabalah, *Shiʿr*, 111.

67 The three phrases contain the names of the caliphs al-Hādī, al-Amīn, and al-Maʾmūn.

You are Time, which freely disposes over mankind [185]
either severely or leniently.
If the days of noble deeds had not ceased to exist
and glory had not died since some time,
[You would have bestowed on the world and those who dwell in it
the protective shade of safety, extended and unfailing.]
You would have heartened everyone with hope,
joined and combined with fear of you.
[Anyone who is not linked with you by some connection
can only live on earth in abasement.
You have become the head of the realm,
acting on a day of battle as cutter of prominent heads.[68]
God has formed you from generosity and nobility
and He formed other people from water and clay.
We give you this praise poem, measured, finely textured,
and you will surely make us gain unmeasured gifts!]

People discussed these verses and called the poet ignorant, because he gave a created being the power of the Creator. However, he said at the beginning "By obeying God" you did such-and-such, as if he were saying, "Whatever you have achieved, you achieved through God Almighty". This makes good sense. [On Ḥumayd he also said:[69]

The Tigris gives water and Abū Ghānim
gives food to the people it waters.
He has prepared his possession for boons
and his sword for the arena of valour.
He mends what enemies rend
but no mender can mend what he rends.
People are a body, the Leader on the Right Path[70]
is its head, and you are the eyes in the head.

68 Instead of "head(s)", the Arabic has "nose(s)", since *ʿirnīn* means "upper part of the nose" and figuratively "chief, prominent leader".

69 The bracketed passage including the verses is taken from the *Mukhtaṣar*, see ed. Farrāj, Appendix, 433–434. For the following four verses see ʿAlī ibn Jabalah, *Shiʿr*, 74. Vss. 1, 4 are in Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 864; Ibn al-Jarrāḥ, *Waraqah*, 114; al-Qālī, *Dhayl al-Amālī*, 96; *Aghānī*, xx, 37, 40; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, iii, 354, and other sources. Vss. 3–4 are in al-Mubarrad, *Kāmil*, ii, 438; vs. 3 is in al-Jurjānī, *Wasāṭah*, 304.

70 The Caliph.

He also said:[71]

Though you make me tread the path of helplessness, I have my prudence.
Death may visit those who commit themselves to sleep.
Seeking livelihood is a necessity and it is allied with effort
And with pursuit that leads to means.
The bucket brings up water from the basin
Only when the rope is firmly twined and twisted.
Wealth is merely my flint and my fire drill,
And my refreshment from nightly travel and pacing[72]
To Ḥumayd, in whom one finds rest and support,[73]
The one who preserves the inheritance of praise and the very noun "praise",[74]
To the one who has made it his custom to build glory
In every lowland and every highland.
His endeavours have exhausted counting them,
On every hill, in every valley.
One cloud of his makes rich, another destroys:
He is like Fate, one time hostile, another time helpful.[75]
He spurs on a banner (?)[76] and leads on the right path.]

71 For the following verses, in *rajaz* metre, see ʿAlī ibn Jabalah, *Shiʿr*, 52–53; not found in other sources.

72 Reading, with Farrāj and the editor of ʿAlī ibn Jabalah, *Shiʿr*, *wa-ʿalalī mina l-surā wa-wakhdī*; Eghbal (p. 23) reads *wa-ʿilalī bayna l-surā wa-wajdī*.

73 Reading *rifdī*, with Farrāj and *Shiʿr*, which may be better than *wafdī* (Eghbal).

74 Ḥumayd is cognate with *ḥamd*, "praise".

75 Both verb forms, *yaʿdū* and *yuʿdī*, have many meanings; they are clearly meant to be antonyms here.

76 The MS is unclear; Farrāj reads *wa-yastaḥillu ʿalaman*, the editor of ʿAlī's *Shiʿr* has *wa-yastaḥīlu maʿlaman*, but Eghbal's undotted first word looks rather like *yastaḥibbu* or, as I read it, *yastaḥiththu*.

32 ʿAwf ibn Muḥallim al-Khuzāʿī[1]

Abū ʿAbd Allāh said: He is the one who belongs to the Banū Saʿd;[2] al-Shaybānī is someone else.[3] ʿAwf ibn Muḥallim was one of the literati, ‖ counted among the {83}
elegant, modern poets. He knew many stories and anecdotes and was knowledgeable about historical events. Ṭāhir ibn Ḥusayn ibn Muṣʿab had made him a close associate and chose him as his boon companion.[4] He never parted with him, whether travelling or in a fixed abode. When he was journeying, the poet would accompany him and Ṭāhir would converse with him and chat with him at night. When he was staying somewhere, ʿAwf would sit with him, discussing learned matters and studying with him, for Ṭāhir was erudite and a poet.[5] He loved literature and lettered people. Among worldly enjoyments there was nothing as welcome to him as literature.

ʿAwf came from Ḥarrān, though some say he came from Raʾs al-ʿAyn.[6] He stayed with Ṭāhir for thirty years, ‖ never parting with him. He would often [186]
ask permission to make a short visit to his family and see his homeland, but

1 Abū l-Minhāl ʿAwf ibn Muḥallim al-Khuzāʿī (thus, instead of "al-Shaybānī" as wrongly in the MS) died c. 220/835, at an advanced age judging by his verse about his "eighty years", below. He was from Ḥarrān (ancient Carrhae), a *mawlā* of the tribe of Khuzāʿah, and was a poet and a scholar of Hadith. He has entries in Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, xvi, 139–145; Ibn Shākir, *Fawāt*, iii, 162–164; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xxiii, 329–402; and see *GAS*, ii, 630–631.

2 They could be Saʿd ibn ʿAmr Khuzāʿah or Saʿd ibn Kaʿb ibn ʿAmr Khuzāʿah (Ibn al-Kalbī/Caskel, *Ǧamharat an-nasab*, i, Tab. 196, 197).

3 Meaning that he must not be confused with ʿAwf ibn Muḥallim al-Shaybānī, a figure in the legendary War of al-Basūs in the pre-Islamic period. Ibn ʿAsākir (*Tārīkh*, xxix, 227) and Yāqūt (*Muʿjam al-buldān*, iii, 119 and v, 239) fell victim to the confusion, wrongly calling the poet "Abū Muḥallim ʿAwf ibn Muḥallim al-Shaybānī". See also (to add to the confusion) al-Maʿarrī, *Ghufrān*, ii, 204, who calls him "al-Ḥarrānī al-Sulamī Abū l-Muḥallim ʿAwf ibn al-Muḥallim", and Abū ʿUbayd al-Bakrī, *Simṭ al-laʾālī*, (i,) 198, who says, "ʿAwf ibn Muḥallim, *mawlā* of the Banū Umayyah (it is also said that he was a *mawlā* of the Banū Shaybān), al-Jazarī al-Ḥarrānī. His *kunyah* was Abü Muḥallim (so says Muḥammad ibn Dāwūd), but Yaḥyā ibn Muḥammad al-Ṣūlī says his *kunyah* was Abū l-Minhāl."

4 Ṭāhir ibn al-Ḥusayn (d. 207/821), of Persian origin, played a crucial role in the conflict between al-Amīn and al-Maʾmūn, being the latter's principal general who with his Khorasanians secured al-Maʾmūn's victory. In 205/821 he became governor of Khorasan, the founder of what became the dynasty known after him as the Ṭāhirids. See *EI2*, x, 103, "Ṭāhir b. al-Ḥusayn" (C.E. Bosworth) and x, 104–105, "Ṭāhirids" (C.E. Bosworth); *EIr*, "Taherids" (Elton E. Daniel). Ṭāhir's grandfather Ruzayq was a *mawlā* of Ṭalḥah ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-Khuzāʿī.

5 Ṭāhir and several of his descendants are listed as poets in *GAS*, ii, 611–612. Much information on the Ṭāhirids and their involvement with poetry and poets is given in al-Shābushtī, *Diyārāt* (ed. ʿAwwād), 109–148, (ed. & tr. Kilpatrick), 138–195.

6 Raʾs al-ʿAyn lies near the present-day border of Syria and Turkey, some 125 km east of Ḥarrān.

Ṭāhir would not allow this, though he gave him large gifts, so that ʿAwf became wealthy. When Ṭāhir died, ʿAwf thought he was free to go and meet his family, to enjoy in his own town the riches he had acquired. However, Ṭāhir's son ʿAbd Allāh firmly took hold of him and held him back, giving him an even higher status than the one he had with his father before.[7] ʿAbd Allāh was one of the most erudite people, most knowledgeable about the ancient battle days of the Arab tribes, and an excellent poet. So ʿAwf again found himself in the same position as before with ʿAbd Allāh's father, staying with his patron during sojourn and travel, again making efforts to have himself released, but in vain. When ʿAbd Allāh ibn Ṭāhir left Iraq for Khorasan, ʿAwf was his close companion, conversing with him at night in a large domed tent. When they approached al-Rayy,[8] having travelled through the night until early morning, they heard a grey dove[9] cooing on a cypress, with a most melancholy sound and most delicate melody. ʿAbd Allāh turned to ʿAwf and said, "Abū Muḥallim,[10] do you hear that sound? How delicate and melancholy! Abū Kabīr al-Hudhalī said it damned well:[11]

> Ah, dove in the thicket, your chick is present,
> your branch is swaying, so why do you lament?"

ʿAwf replied, "I swear to God, Emir, Abū Kabīr said it excellently! In the tribe of Hudhayl there were forty fine, noteworthy poets, not mentioning the middling

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7 ʿAbd Allāh ibn Ṭāhir (182–230/798–844) was, as governor of Khorasan, a virtually independent ruler. See *EI2*, i, 52–53, "ʿAbd All b. Ṭāhir" (E. Marin); *EI3*, "ʿAbdallāh b. Ṭāhir" (C. Edmund Bosworth); *EIr*, "ʿAbdallāh b. Ṭāher" (C. Edmund Bosworth).

8 At the time an important town, now ruins near Tehran. Versions of the following story and the verses are also in al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, xi, 165–166; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh*, xxix, 227–228; Ibn Ẓāfir, *Badāʾiʿ*, 111; Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, 140–143; idem, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, iii, 119–120; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, iii, 86–87; Ibn Shākir, *Fawāt*, iii, 162–163; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xxiii, 397–400. For verses of the poem see also al-Mubarrad, *Kāmil*, ii, 421; Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, v, 414; al-Qālī, *Amālī*, i, 133. The opening verse that is said to be by Abū Kabīr al-Hudhalī (of the tribe of Hudhayl, d. early 1st/7th c.) is not found in his collected verse in al-Sukkarī, *Sharḥ ashʿār al-Hudhaliyyīn* and it is attributed to ʿAwf in *ʿIqd*, *Kāmil*, al-Qālī's *Amālī*, Yamūt ibn al-Muzarraʿ, *Amālī*, 67, and other sources. In some versions of the anecdote the poet is called al-Hilālī, apparently a corruption of al-Hudhalī.

9 In some versions the bird is a nightingale, even though the poet mentions a dove.

10 Since the poet's *kunyah* is usually said to be Abū l-Minhāl, *Yā Abā Muḥallim* may be an error for *Yā bna Muḥallim*. But it recurs below, p. 273, and is also found in other sources.

11 *Qātala llāh Abā Kabīr*, literally "May God fight Abū Kabīr!", a common curse that often, paradoxically, expresses admiration.

ones, and Abū Kabīr was one of the most prominent and proficient ones."[12] ʿAbd Allāh said, "I am determined: you must make a continuation of this verse!" "May God make the Emir prosper!" answered ʿAwf, "An old man like me to be burdened with extemporising in emulation of a great poet such as you know Abū Kabīr to be!" But ʿAbd Allāh said, "I am determined, you must. I am asking you for the sake of Ṭāhir's memory!" ‖ Then ʿAwf said: [187]

Every day in strange parts, being far from home?
Will remoteness never wane and give relief?
Separation, scattering people, has jaded my mounts;
shall I ever see separation jaded?
I am kept awake in al-Rayy by the lament of a dove,
so I lamented too. Anyone with a saddened heart will lament.
It lamented but did not show any tears,
while I lament with flowing streams of tears.
It lamented though its two chicks could there be seen,
but between my chicks and me lie immense wastelands.
"Ah, dove in the thicket, your chick is present,
your branch is swaying, so why do you lament?"
Perhaps ʿAbd Allāh's generosity will reverse my remoteness
and my walking stick will be laid down at last!
For riches will bring a man near his friend
and the absence of riches casts down the destitute.

ʿAbd Allāh shed tears and pitied him when he heard his yearning for his family and hometown. "Ibn Muḥallim," he said, "how well and how subtly did you express what you want, asking leave to return to you family and your children! I ‖ swear to God, I have been too possessive of you, greedy for your company! {84}
But, by God! you shall not go beyond this place but return to your family and children." He gave orders for him to be given thirty thousand dirhams for his expenses and let him go to his land. That was when ʿAwf said:[13]

Son of the man who ruled the East and the West
and who dressed with safety both West and East![14]

12 Hudhayl is the only tribe of whom a tribal *dīwān* is extant; the edition of al-Sukkarī's commentary includes 134 poets.

13 See al-Qālī, *Amālī*, i, 50–51; al-Tawḥīdī, *Baṣāʾir*, vi, 85–86; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh*, xxix, 225–226; Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, xvi, 143–145; idem, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, v, 239–240; Ibn Shākir, *Fawāt*, iii, 164; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xxiii, 400–401.

14 *Al-mashriqān*, the dual form of *al-mashriq* ("the East"), means "East and West", i.e., the

My eighty years—may you be made to reach them!—
have made my hearing need an interpreter;[15]
Instead of an upright figure they gave me crookedness,
though once I was like a straight shaft under a spearhead;
They replaced the resolve and ambition of a young man
with the concerns of a base, cowardly fool.
[188] 5 Once, in my homeland, I was madly in love
with pretty women. What have I now with them?
So take me back, my dear two friends,[16]
to my homeland, before my fingertips turn pale![17]
And before my death is announced to women
who live in Ḥarrān and al-Raqqatān.[18]
May rain bless the palaces of al-Shādiyākh
when I have gone, and the palaces of al-Miyān.[19]

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whole world; in the second hemistich *al-maghribān*, the dual form *al-maghrib* ("the West") has the same meaning.

15 This verse is often quoted in works on rhetorical figures, under various headings such as *al-iʿtirāḍ* ("insertion, parenthesis"), *iltifāt* ("apostrophe"), or *takmīl* ("completion"), see e.g. al-ʿAskarī, *Ṣināʿatayn*, 410 (anonymously); 140; al-Khafājī, *Sirr al-faṣāḥah*, 139; Ibn Rashīq, *ʿUmdah*, ii, 45; Ibn Aflaḥ, *Muqaddimah*, 19; Ibn al-Ṣayrafī, *Afḍaliyyāt*, 214; Ibn Abī l-Iṣbaʿ, *Taḥrīr*, 360, 292; al-Qarṭājannī, *Minhāj*, 315; al-Ḥīllī, *Sharḥ al-Kāfiyah*, 321; Ibn Ḥijjah, *Khizānah*, ii, 473, iv, 53. The famous Būyid vizier al-Ṣāḥib ibn ʿAbbād (d. 385/995) called it *ḥashw al-lawzīnaj*, "almond paste stuffing" (al-Thaʿālibī, *Thimār*, 610; idem, *Laṭāʾif al-lutf*, 140; and other sources).

16 Since this poem seems to date from after Ṭāhir's death, it is likely that the dual is an example of the ancient "two companions convention" (see above, p. 45).

17 A metonym for death; see e.g. al-Baṭalyawsī, *Sharḥ al-ashʿār al-sittah*, ii, 282, on a verse by ʿAntarah (... *taṣfarru kaffu akhīhā*): *ay yadhhabu mā fīhā min al-ḥayāh wa-l-dam ḥattā taṣfarra wa-bi-dhālika yūṣafu l-mayyit; yuqāl: iṣfarrat banānuhū, ay māt* (he quotes ʿAwf's verse). James Montgomery, in ʿAntarah ibn Shaddād, *Shiʿr / War Songs*, 57, does not follow this interpretation.

18 The text has al-Raqmatān, which according to Yāqūt's *Muʿjam al-buldān* is a village near Basra or another in Najd on the Arabian Peninsula; neither can be intended here. In his entry on al-Miyān (v, 240) it is al-Marqabān. Correct is surely al-Raqqatān, as in his *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ* (xvi, 144) and in al-Qālī, *Amālī*, al-Tawḥīdī, Baṣāʾir, Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh Dimashq*, Ibn Shākir, *Fawāt*, and al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*. Al-Raqqatān is a dual of al-Raqqah (poets sometimes use a dual instead of the singular for no obvious reason), or it may refer to al-Raqqah and nearby al-Rāfiqah (see Yāqūt's entry "al-Raqqatān"). Al-Raqqah is not near Ḥarrān but seen from Iran it may at least seem so.

19 Al-Shādiyākh (or al-Shādhiyākh as below, p. 470) is another name for Nishapur/Nīsābūr in Khorasan, originally a garden of ʿAbd Allāh ibn Ṭāhir, where he built a palace (Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-buldān* s.v. al-Shādhiyākh, where this and the following verse are quoted). Al-Miyān, according to Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, s.v., refers to locations in Nīsābūr where the

So often have I prayed there
that fickle Time would pass them by!

The palaces mentioned in the poem are all in Nīsābūr and Marw, where the Ṭāhirids live. ʿAwf was familiar with these places because he often visited them and stayed with the Ṭāhirids, which is why he prayed on behalf of them. Thereupon he said farewell to ʿAbd Allāh and left him, in the most joyful mood. But at some stage on his way death overtook him and he never arrived at his family. When the news reached ʿAbd Allāh he was much grieved.

ʿAwf composed the following panegyric on ʿAbd Allāh ibn Ṭāhir:[20]

Off with you![21] For my fortune will not come to anything with anyone else,
nor will my term be any shorter if it is not decreed for me.
I am modest, needing little; though I am poor
my modest wishes conceal my poverty.
Riches[22] will come to me without humbly begging,
so I will approach my companion and protector.
My tongue and my heart are poets, both of them,
but my face is made speechless, not a poet.
If my face were a poet I would gain riches;
but my face is like Ibn Ṭāhir's face,
A man who is anxious that no blame would scratch his honour
and who is not afraid of the blades of cutting swords.
Go ahead![23] You have lowered your bucket into his sea,
and there is no shame in seeking water from brimful seas.[24]

Ṭāhirids built their palaces. He does not mention Marw (to the N.-E. of Nīsābūr, now called Mary, in Turkmenistan), as does the text below.

20 Not found in other sources.

21 I take *ilayka* to be a shortening of *ilayka ʿannī*. Alternatively, he is already addressing his patron: "To you (I turn)", even though Ṭāhir is mentioned with the 3rd, not the 2nd, person in what follows.

22 The MS is unclear; Farrāj reads *al-ghinā* but suggests that *al-qirā* ("hospitable reception") is also possible.

23 I read, with the MS, *ʿalayka*, which would match the opening *ilayka*. Farrāj deems this possible but prefers to read *ghalīlun*, "(I am) parched"; Eghbal suggests *malīkun*, "a king".

24 One cannot drink sea water, of course, but *baḥr*, conventionally used for a magnanimous man, is usually translated as "sea", though it may also refer to a large river (see also ʿAwf's poem below, "I marvel").

[189] Mentioning ʿAbd Allāh and his ancestors,[25] he said:[26]

Muṣʿab's[27] descendants are to the realm the ornament of peace,
and in war, defending the realm, they are bright cutting swords.
Around the realm's tent lie lions of Muṣʿab's family,
that will break the necks of lions.
Ṭāhir does not swerve from loving the Caliph,
nor will he stop, until hidden in a grave.
And he has left in ʿAbd Allāh a champion:
is there any champion of the realm like ʿAbd Allāh?
A man who, if his soul were to conceal ungratefulness for a favour,
would fight it, to rectify his inner thoughts.

Widely known on earth are the following verses on Ṭāhir. He composed them standing on a bridge while Ṭāhir, in a river boat, was on his way to the govern-
{85} ment ‖ building. ʿAwf said, raising his voice:[28]

I marvel at the river boat of Ibn al-Ḥusayn:
how can it move without sinking?
Two seas, one beneath and another one
above, covering it!
And I wonder: why don't the wooden planks,
touched by him, sprout leaves?

ʿAwf ibn Muḥallim was very generous with food, he was fond of wine, entertainment, and rakishness. He had friends in whose company he indulged in such pleasures, socialising with them and conferring boons on them. Minor poets came to visit him and offer panegyrics on him, and he would reward

25 The MS has *waḥdahū*, "only"; I follow Farrāj, reading *wa-ajdādahū*.

26 Not found in other sources.

27 Muṣʿab ibn Ruzayq was ʿAbd Allāh's great-grandfather.

28 Yāqūt, *Muʾjam al-udabāʾ*, xvi, 145; Ibn Shākir, *Fawāt*, iii, 162; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xxiii, 397; Abū ʿUbayd al-Bakrī, *Simṭ al-laʾālī*, (i,) 198–199; the anecdote is said to be how ʿAwf became connected with Ṭāhir. The verses are quoted anonymously in al-Jurjānī, *Wasāṭah*, 260; attributed to Diʿbil in Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, i, 314–315; to Abū l-Shamaqmaq in al-Wāḥidī's commentary on al-Mutanabbī (al-Mutanabbī, *Dīwān*, 41); to ʿAlī ibn Jabalah al-ʿAkawwak in Ibn Ẓāfir, *Badāʾiʿ*, 289; and to Muqaddis ibn Ṣayfī al-Khalūqī (otherwise unknown) in al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, x, 484; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntaẓam*, ix, 165–166; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, ii, 519; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xvi, 398–399.

them and bestow gifts on them. They would ask him to approach Ṭāhir on their behalf; he would intercede for them and ensure that they were granted rewards.

One day a poet from Basra called Rawḥ came to see ʿAbd Allāh. He had composed a panegyric poem on him in which he also praised ʿAwf with some verses, for ʿAwf had let him lodge with him and had been kind to him. But when ʿAwf heard these verses he found them to be very feeble. "Let me hear what you said on the Emir", said ʿAwf, because he assumed, judging by ‖ what he had heard, [190] that the man's style was generally feeble. So the man recited the poem to him. "You must not present it to him," said ʿAwf, "because the Emir is a discerning critic of poetry and can tell good from bad. He will not like this poem of yours and it won't do you any good. But I can compose a panegyric poem on him, and you can claim it as yours and recite it to him." The man refused, however, thinking that ʿAwf was jealous. He was stupid and unaware of his own shortcomings. So ʿAwf said, "All right then, do as you like!" Rawḥ recited his poem to ʿAbd Allāh, who said to him, "Are emirs and princes to be addressed with such verse? Would any freeborn man accept anything like this?" He returned the poem to Rawḥ, who went back to ʿAwf, complaining. ʿAwf said, "Haven't I given you good advice? Didn't I tell you that he would not accept such poetry?" When ʿAwf came to see ʿAbd Allāh, the Emir said, "Damn you, Abū Muḥallim! Haven't you heard the poem of that man who came to visit us, mentioning you and me?" "O yes, I have," replied ʿAwf, "May God give glory to the Emir! I heard it and gave him my sincere advice, but he did not take it." On this event ʿAwf composed the following:[29]

Rawḥ recited to me a panegyric of his composition.
I said, "Is this poetry?" He said, "What else?"[30]
When he began to recite it I imagined
I was in an air-conditioned room.[31]
"Let me hear more!" I said, taking advantage of him,
"Ice in summer is part of good living!"

29 Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, xvi, 145, with a shortened version of the preceding story.

30 *Fayshī* (spelled *fʾysh* in the MS, with "silent" *alif*), an interesting colloquialism, a contraction of Classical Arabic *fa-ayyu shayʾ hiya* (as explained by Farrāj; the editorial gloss in *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, deriving it from a verb *fāsha*, should be ignored).

31 *Fī qubbati l-khayshī*, literally, "in a jute pavilion", i.e., fanned with moistened sheets of jute, moved by a servant, a cooling device known in English also as punka(h), from Hindi. The poet plays on the senses of the word *bārid*, "cold" but also "insipid, dull, inane", said of poetry.

Of ʿAwf's admired and choice poetry—but all his verse is in fact choice, without a single inferior or imperfect verse—are the following verses:[32]

Whenever I lodged in the dwellings of people
I intended to be loyal to my companions.
I was good to them when they were good to me,
and I avoided offence when they offended me.
[191] I would look at what might cause them misgivings
with an eye covered with their eyes.[33]

Choice verses by him are also the following:[34]

I fell in love with a young girl:
a great temptation she was![35]
She was like the full moon, but she
shone also in daylight.
"You're covered with grey dust", she said.[36]
I said, "That isn't dust.
It is what takes princes
from their dwellings to their graves.
{86} Girl, have you ever seen a night
that gave light without daylight?"
She replied, "You have pre-empted my argument
with a good excuse."

Choice, too, are the following verses by him:[37]

32 Ibn Shākir, *Fawāt*, iii, 164; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xxiii, 402.

33 Reading *ʿuyūnihimū* as in the editions; interpretation not wholly clear to me. The MS has *ʿuyūbihimū*, "their defects", *Fawāt* has *mā yasurruhumū*, "what makes them glad" instead of *mā yurībuhumū*.

34 Ibn Shākir, *Fawāt*, iii, 164; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xxiii, 402. Vss. 1–2 are in Ibn Abī ʿAwn, *Tashbīhāt*, 308; al-ʿAskarī, *Dīwān al-maʿānī*, i, 262; al-Ḥātimī, *Ḥilyat al-muḥāḍarah*, ii, 238; al-Thaʿālibī, *Lubāb*, 153 (vss. 1–2); Usāmah ibn Munqidh, *Badīʿ*, 187 (anonymously). Vss. 3–4 are, anonymously, in Ibn Bassām, *Dhakhīrah*, i, 910.

35 There is a form of *ṭibāq* (antithesis): *ṣaghīrah* ("young", also "small") and *kibār* ("great", also "old"). *Fawāt* and *Wāfī* add another verse here: "Simple-minded, not knowing, in her | naïvety, her right hand from her left."

36 His hair has turned grey.

37 Not found in other sources.

A happy night we had, and happy was our passion in it,
until dawn began, or nearly began, to edge in.
No night of bliss has equalled it,
no Night of the Sacrificial Feast, no Night of the Fast-Breaking.[38]
Comparing it with all nights, I found its merits
almost equal to the Night of Power.[39]
In it, I enjoyed myself at leisure with a tender young girl,
shapely, more radiant than sun or full moon,
Killing with her eyes, captivating with her flirting,
ravishing the hearts of men, yet without knowing.

Transmitted and admired are the following verses:[40]

I asked lovers who had imposed on themselves
the pangs of love in bygone ages,
Saying to them, "What will make love disappear
after it has lodged itself between one's ribs and chest?"
"The cure of love", they said, "is love you give
to someone else, or a long distance, being separated;
Or else despair, so that one's mind turns numb, [192]
after avidly hoping, for despair helps to bear it."
I implore you,[41] as a lover who makes you incline to mercy,
that you will not be indifferent and lax to me.
One time you have killed me and another time you revived me;
you ruined my whole life between making me die and resurrecting me.

Admired too, and widely known, are the following verses by him:[42]

38 Referring to *ʿīd al-aḍḥā*, on the 10th of the month Dhū l-Ḥijjah, and to *ʿīd al-fiṭr* at the end of Ramadan.

39 *Laylat al-qadr*, mentioned in the Qur'an (Q al-Qadr 97) and said to be better than a thousand months; traditionally believed to be the night when the Qur'an was first revealed, on one of the last odd-numbered days of Ramadan. Vss. 2–3 seem to have been inspired by verses by al-ʿArjī (d. c. 124/741): "No night, in my view, or, say, a Friday, | no Night of the Sacrificial Feast, no Night of Fast-Breaking || Equals those two days for me; rather, | they are the equal of the Night of Power." (*Aghānī*, i, 399).

40 Vss. 1–4 are attributed to Umm al-Ḍaḥḥāk al-Muḥāribiyyah in Ibn Dāwūd, *Zahrah*, 454 and al-Qālī, *Amālī*, ii, 86–87; vss. 1, 3 are in Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, v, 343 (anonymously).

41 For *qaʿīdaki*, compare Lane, *Lexicon* (ق ع د).

42 Attributed to ʿAbd Allāh ibn Ayyūb al-Taymī (d. 209/824) in *Aghānī*, xx, 44 (where the

The wine cup never stopped slaying our reason,
taking away one after another,
Until it was time to perform the evening prayer,
when we were senseless with drunkenness.
Anyone who knows what is due to bliss
and what is due to a companion will not behave foolishly,[43]
And no jesting would occur among us
that might stir up a quarrel over the cool fresh drink.

Choice verses by him are also the following:[44]

I am possessed of self-control, but when people provoke me
I violently defend my honour.
If they seek my affection I am kind to them;
there is no good in someone who does not relent or turn a blind eye.
Not every fraudulent man can harm you with his fraud,
nor will everyone whose nobility you love[45] please you.
Often, when someone argued with me, did I make him change his words,
and said to him, "The judgement is not as you judge!"[46]
I gave him a frightful ride, until I left him
in dire straits, no longer straining himself or moving.
But I requite with nobility or resentment
those who deserve it, in hardship or ease.

Good are also the following verses:[47]

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poem opens with another verse, beginning: "I drank wine on Thursday …"); vs. 1 anonymously in Abū ʿUbaydah, *Majāz*, ii, 169; al-Anbārī, *Aḍdād*, 105; al-Jarīrī, *Jalīs*, i, 518, and later sources such as Lane, *Lexicon* (*GhW*).

43 Instead of *al-naʿīm* ("bliss") and *al-jalīs* ("companion"), *Aghānī* has *al-khamīs* ("Thursday") and *mudām* ("old wine"), respectively. I thank Abeer al-Abbasi (personal communication) for helping me to interpret this verse; she also suggests reading *al-nadīm* ("the drinking companion") instead of *al-naʿīm*.

44 Vss. 1–5 are found in a long poem (as vss. 17–18, 60, 19–29) attributed to the pre-Islamic poet Ṭarafah ibn al-ʿAbd in his *Dīwān* (Ṭarafah, *Dīwān*, 167–170, in the Appendix, *Ṣilah*), but not found in other recensions, and the verses are likely to be by ʿAwf.

45 Reading *tahwā*, with Ṭarafah, *Dīwān*, instead of *tuʾtā*.

46 Reading, with Ṭarafah, *Dīwān*, *ghayyartu qawlahū* instead of *gharrabtu qawlahū*, and *taqḍī* instead of *yaqḍī*.

47 Not found in other sources.

To those I love my love is lasting;
I am not a man of two colours, black and piebald,[48]
A tainted one, from whom his intimate friends see fickleness,[49] [193]
whose character when put to the test falls to pieces,
Who mixes with his friends while flattering them
(the worst of friends is a false flatterer).
I am sensitive towards a friend, and careful, {87}
for any man who is not wary of being blamed is stupid.

Widely popular are the following verses:[50]

Whenever God sends down to me something I dislike,
He will send down relief for me thereafter.
Often have I split asunder[51] two matters
that had become entangled, wrestling in my breast.

48 The odd grammar (*wa-lastu bi-dhī lawnayni aswadu ablaqū* instead of … *aswada ablaqā*) is apparently due to the rhyme.

49 Farrāj reads *taẓarrufan* but I prefer *taṭarrufan* (as in the MS); cf. al-Zabīdī, *Tāj* (*ṬRF*): *rajul mutaṭarrif: man lā yathbutu ʿalā amr*.

50 The verses are in a poem attributed to Miskīn al-Dārimī (d. 89/708) in al-Murtaḍā, *Amālī*, i, 475 and al-Khālidiyyān, *Ashbāh*, i, 66 (vs. 2 only); see also Miskīn al-Dārimī, *Dīwān*, 30–31. They are attributed to Miskīn al-Dārimī or ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Zabīr al-Asadī (d. after 75/694) in al-Buḥturī, *Ḥamāsah*, 264, and to ʿUbayd Allāh ibn al-Ḥurr al-Juʿfī (d. 68/687) in Anon., *Majmūʿat al-maʿānī*, 136.

51 Paronomasia of *faraj* ("relief", vs. 1) and *farrajtu* ("I split asunder", vs, 2).

33 Abū Nuwās[1]

ʿAlī ibn Ḥarb, the brother of Muḥammad ibn Ḥarb ibn Khālid ibn al-Mihzam told me: [my brother Muḥammad ibn Ḥarb told me:][2]—there was nearly fifty years between the two brothers—that Abū Nuwās, whose proper name was al-Ḥasan ibn Hāniʾ and whose teknonym was Abū ʿAlī,[3] was born in al-Ahwāz, near

1 Al-Ḥasan ibn Hāniʾ, known as Abū Nuwās (c. 140–c. 198/c. 755–c. 813), is the most famous, the most often quoted, and, according to many, the greatest poet of all the poets represented in the present book. He has the longest chapter and is given more biographical data than others (as for the number of verses quoted, he is surpassed by the rather unknown Rabīʿah al-Raqqī, §30). Born near al-Ahwāz (Ahvaz, in what is now S.-W. Iran), of a mother whose is said to have been either Persian or Sindī (Indian) and a father whose ethnicity is not known, he grew up in Basra and Kufa and moved to Baghdad. Although in popular lore and in *The Thousand and One Nights* he figures (his name frequently deformed as Abū Nawwās) as a kind of court jester to Hārūn al-Rashīd, he was in fact closer to Hārūn's son al-Amīn, whose boon companion he was. He was a versatile poet excelling in almost all genres, but famous especially for his Bacchic and homoerotic poems, but Ibn al-Muʿtazz, as James Montgomery notes ("Abū Nuwās, The Justified Sinner?", 92), "does not highlight Abū Nuwās's transgressive or sybaritic excesses". In modern times he is often called a Persian, either proudly, by Iranians, or by some Arab scholars, with dubious motives (e.g. Ḍayf, *al-ʿAṣr al-ʿAbbāsī al-awwal*, 220: "He is the most important poet to depict this moral decay in all its aspects; he had a Persian mother and father"). He has entries in Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 796–826; Yamūt ibn al-Muzarraʿ, *Amālī*, 57–60; Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, i, 504–505; al-Marzubānī, *Muwashshaḥ*, 407–444; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, viii, 475–492; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh*, xiii, 407–466; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, ii, 95–104; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xii, 283–289; Ibn Faḍl Allāh, *Masālik* (ed. al-Jubūrī), xiv, 349–390. Though often mentioned in *Aghānī*, regrettably he has no section of his own apart from a brief one on his relationship with his friend Janān (xx, 61–73). Among the many premodern works devoted to him are Abū Hiffān, *Akhbār Abī Nuwās*; Muhalhil ibn Yamūt, *Sariqāt Abī Nuwās*; and Ibn Manẓūr, *Akhbār Abī Nuwās*. For modern reference works, see *GAS*, ii, 543–550, ix, 298; *EI2*, i, 143–144, "Abū Nuwās" (Ewald Wagner); *EI3*, "Abū Nuwās" (Ewald Wagner); Cooperson and Toorawa (eds), *Arabic Literary Culture, 500–925*, 21–32 (Philip F. Kennedy). The secondary literature in Arabic and Western languages is extensive; fundamental is Wagner, *Abū Nuwās*; see also Kennedy, *Abu Nuwas: A Genius of Poetry*. His *Dīwān* was redacted by several premodern scholars and has been edited several times in modern times, usually expurgated. The only reliable and complete edition is that by Ewald Wagner, in five volumes (vol. iv, on love poetry, was edited by Gregor Schoeler). There exist many translations in western languages of selections of his poetry, mostly that on wine and love. Detailed references to translations in various languages may be found in Wagner, *Abū Nuwās in Übersetzung*. In view of the plethora of sources on Abū Nuwās I have been sparing with giving references to parallels.

2 The addition is taken from the *Mukhtaṣar*. They are nephews of Abū Hiffān, mentioned below.

3 Abū Nuwās's *kunyah* is no teknonym but a nickname "he with a dangling hairlock". For other explanations of his name see Ibn Manẓūr, *Akhbār*, i, 3–4. He had children, but little is known about them (see Wagner, *Abū Nuwās*, 22–24).

the cut-off mountain known as Rāhbān,[4] in the year 139.[5] He died in Baghdad in the year 195, at the age of fifty-five,[6] and was buried in the Shūnīzī cemetery at Tall al-Yahūd.[7] He died in a tavern that he used to frequent. His Ahwāzī mother, called Jullabān, came from a town in the Ahwāz district ‖ called Nahr [194]
Tīrā.[8] His father, who was from Damascus, belonged to the army of Marwān ibn Muḥammad.[9] He was a *mawlā* of the clan of al-Ḥakam ibn al-Jarrāḥ, of the Banū Saʿd al-ʿAshīrah.[10] He had come to al-Ahwāz in the days of Marwān ibn Muḥammad, with the cavalry. He married Jullabān and fathered several children with her, among them Abū Nuwās and his brothers Abū Muḥammad and Abū Muʿādh. Abū Muʿādh became the tutor of the sons of Faraj al-Rukhkhajī.[11] Hāniʾ, their father, died when Abū Nuwās was a young boy. When he was six years old his mother sent him to Basra, to be taught in an elementary school.[12] When he was an adolescent[13] he moved to al-Ahwāz and attached himself closely to Wālibah ibn al-Ḥubāb, the poet.[14] At the time Wālibah lived in al-Ahwāz with his paternal cousin al-Najāshī, who was its governor. He became his tutor and he educated him. Abū Nuwās was a handsome, pretty boy; Wālibah fell in love with him and was much pleased with him. He took care of his education until he had learned much from him. When Wālibah died, Abū Nuwās attached himself to Khalaf al-Aḥmar,[15] who was the best poet and the best scholar of his time. Abū Nuwās learned much from him too and acquired a wide erudition, becoming unique in the field in his own days.

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4 Persian for "road-guard". The *Mukhtaṣar* has *Rāhūyān*. Neither the "cut-off mountain" (*al-jabal al-maqṭūʿ*) nor Rāhbān/Rāhūyān has been found (cf. Wagner, *Abū Nuwās*, 13).

5 AD 756–757; reports on his year of birth vary widely from 136/753–755 to 150/768. His place of birth is also uncertain, said to have been Basra in another report.

6 He must have died after 195/810–811, because it seems he composed elegies on the death of al-Amīn in 198/813 (*Dīwān*, i, 342–344). Wagner places his death between the middle of 198 and the beginning of 200 (*Abū Nuwās*, 10–11).

7 Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, s.v. al-Shūnīziyyah: a cemetery in West Baghdad, where several famous early mystics were also buried.

8 Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, s.v.

9 The last Umayyad caliph (r. 127–132/744–750).

10 See Ibn al-Kalbī/Caskel, *Ǧamharat an-nasab*, i, Tab. 266, ii, 294–295 (al-Ḥakam ibn Saʿd al-ʿAshīrah, belonging to the Southern Arabs). Abū Nuwas sometimes gives himself the *nisbah* al-Ḥakamī.

11 Faraj ibn Ziyād al-Rukhkhajī was a *mawlā*, attached to a daughter of al-Rashīd called Ḥamdūnah, who was appointed as governor of al-Ahwāz and deposed in 192/807–808 (al-Jahshiyārī, *Wuzarāʾ*, 270–271).

12 *Kuttāb*; see *EI2*, v, 567–570 (J.M. Landau).

13 *Taraʿraʿa*; cf. al-Thaʿālibī, *Fiqh al-lughah*, 59: "when one is past the age of ten".

14 See above, § 10, and see Schoeler, "Wāliba b. al-Ḥubāb", on Wālibah and Khalaf al-Aḥmar as Abū Nuwās's teachers.

15 See § 25.

Several people told me that Abū Nuwās said, "What do you think of a man who did not compose poetry until he had memorised the collected verse of sixty women of the Arabs, among them al-Khansāʾ and Laylā? Not mentioning the men!"[16]

I have been told on the authority of Ibn Marzūq, on the authority of Abū Hiffān, who said:[17] Abū Nuwās was the most erudite of people and most knowledgeable about all genres of poetry. He had a natural talent, he did not have to make great efforts at composing poetry, he did not painstakingly revise it[18] or devote much care to it. He often composed it while drunk. His poetry is uneven:
[195] thus one finds ‖ in it things that reach the Pleiades in quality and strength, and other things that are in the abyss in feebleness and poorness. In spite of his great erudition and learning he was a rake and a libertine, and mischievous. But with all that he was good-natured and full of esprit. He could bewitch people with his charm, his good nature, and his many pleasantries. He was the most generous of people, he did not hoard his money or hold on to it. He was a fervent partizan of Qaḥṭān against ʿAdnān,[19] on whom he composed many poems, praising Qaḥṭān and lampooning their opponents. He was suspected of adhering to the views of the Khārijites.[20]

On the superiority of al-Yaman (the Southern Arabs) and boasting on them, the following verse by him is transmitted:[21]

16 Tumāḍir bint ʿAmr, known as al-Khansāʾ (d. after 23/644), the most famous Arab woman poet, composed numerous elegies on her two brothers who died before the coming of Islam; Laylā al-Akhyaliyyah (d. c. 85/704) composed elegies as well as some panegyric and invective poetry.

17 Abū Hiffān ʿAbd Allāh ibn Aḥmad al-Mihzamī (d. c. 256/870), author of *Akhbār Abī Nuwās*; he knew Abū Nuwās personally. See GAS, i, 372–373, ii, 544, xvi, 197–198. He has an entry himself, below § 118.

18 Farrāj is surely right in suggesting reading *yuḥakkiku* (as in the *Mukhtaṣar*) instead of *yuḥallilu*. Compare the view of the poet al-Ḥuṭayʾah, who prefers *al-shiʿr al-ḥawlī al-muḥakkak*, "poetry composed and revised over a whole year" (al-Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān*, ii, 13).

19 Pro-Southern Arabs, against the Northern Arabs.

20 The politico-religious movement or sect of Khārijites, "dissidents", did not believe that the caliphate should be restricted to Quraysh, the Prophet's tribe (the majority, "Sunnite" view) or the descendants of ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib (the Shiʾites). There are no indications that Abū Nuwās held Khārijite views (compare what is said of Bashshār, above, p. 38), but there are reports that he was accused of *zandaqah*, Manichaeism (see e.g. Abū Hiffān, *Akhbār*, 122–123, Ibn Manẓūr, *Akhbār*, i, 224–225). On the several paradoxes and seeming contradictions in Abū Nuwās's poetry, between antinomianism and piety, dissoluteness and asceticism, and sinning as a virtue, see especially Montgomery, "Abū Nuwās, The Justified Sinner?".

21 For the verse and the following poem see Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān*, ii, 1–11 (47 vss., of which Ibn al-Muʿtazz quotes vss. 1, 4, 6, 5, 13–14, 10, 19, 11–12, 20–21, 33, 28–30, 22, 35–36, 38–39, 41, 40,

I have nothing to do with an abode obliterated and altered,
struck by rain and pebble-scattering wind!

In this poem he says: {88}

We are the lords of Nāʿiṭ, to us belongs Sanaa,
and musk lies on its heights.[22]
Our ancestors whose names begin with Dhū subdued all people,
those who desired favours from them and those who feared them.
Al-Ḍaḥḥāk was one of us, who was venerated by
the jinnees and the wild beasts in their grounds.[23]
And when Persia resisted Bahrām,
we acted harshly towards its margraves,[24]
Until we gave him a whole realm
the ceremonial processions of which are too large for the eyes to behold.[25]
Qābūs died in our chains,
after seven years, fully counted.
At the battle of Sātīdamā we beat the Banū l-Aṣfar,
death raging amidst their battalions.[26]

43, 47), where it opens the section of *hijāʾ* (invective poetry); it is in fact a combination of invective and tribal vaunting (*fakhr*). For an annotated German translation see Wagner, *Abū Nuwās*, 362–366. Even apart from the uncertain order of the verses, the poem is not one of Abū Nuwās's more accessible ones. The opening verse of the poem is an example, one of many in his poems, of his rejection of the traditional Bedouin introductory theme of the *aṭlāl*, traces of an abandoned site. For rejoinders, poems with the same metre and rhyme, by Northern Arab partizans, see Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān*, v, 493–496.

22 Nāʿīṭ and Sanaa (Ṣanʿāʾ) are in Yemen. Instead of *Ṣanʿāʾu wa-l-misku*, a variant has *Ghumdānu wa-l-Samku*, two other place-names; cf. Wagner, *Abū Nuwās*, 246, 363. Because Ibn al-Muʿtazz gives al-Mubarrad's glosses to the poem, below, some annotation is deferred.

23 Al-Ḍaḥḥāk ("Laughalot") is the Arabic mispronouncing version of Dahāk (also spelled Zahhāk), a mythological tyrannical demon-king in pre-Islamic Persian lore, appropriated by the Southern Arabs for their history. See e.g. *EI2*, xi, 554–555, "Zuhāk" (E. Yarshater). Wagner translates *al-khābil* as "der Teufel" (the Devil), but here it refers to demons or jinn, collectively, as is explained in al-Mubarrad's commentary below.

24 A reference to the story of the pre-Islamic (5th-century) Persian, Sasanid king Bahrām Gūr (Jūr in Arabic); see the commentary below. *Marāzib* is the Arabic plural of *marzubān*, from Persian *marz-bān*, "warden of the march, protector of a frontier province".

25 I do not understand *yajtamiʿu l-ṭarfu fī mawākibihā* and have followed the *Dīwān* (*yanḥasiru l-ṭarfu ʿan mawākibihā*).

26 Sātīdamā is a river (identified as the river now called Batman) forming the border between the Byzantine and Sasanian empires.

Therefore boast of Qaḥṭān, not dejectedly,
for Ḥātim the Generous is one of their distinctions.[27]
When Barwīz sought refuge, then, with us,
when war gave rich milk to its milker,[28]
The Banū Qabīṣah defended him with
Khaṭṭī spears and shining cutting swords.[29]
[196] You never see a horseman like their horsemen
when heads tumble from shoulders:
ʿAmr, Qays, the two al-Ashtars,
Zayd of the Horses, lions in the arena![30]
And lampoon Nizār, slit their skins,[31]
and tear off the veil from their vices!
But love Quraysh, for the love of its Aḥmad,[32]
and thank them for their great gifts.
When Quraysh trace their genealogy,
half of their lineages belong to us.[33]
The mother of al-Mahdī, "the Rightly Guided" of Hāshim,
Umm Mūsā l-Khayr, belongs to us, so vaunt and boast of her!
But turn rather to their proud chiefs, the Ashʿaths,
and the noble lords among the Muhallabīs.
As for Tamīm, they will never rinse
what that slave poured on their moustaches!
Their first and last glory,
if it is about glory, is Ḥājib's bow.
Of Qays ʿAylān's ignominies I want
to mention only that Muḥārib of theirs.
Eating penises has made them perish
and has loosened the tongues of their censurers.

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27 The pre-Islamic poet Ḥātim al-Ṭāʾī (of the tribe of Ṭayyiʾ), proverbial for his open-handedness; see *GAS*, ii, 208–209, *EI2*, iii, 274–275, "Ḥātim al-Ṭāʾī" (C. van Arendonk).

28 Barwīz, also Abarwīz, Arabicised forms of Persian Parvīz or Parvēz, Middle Persian Pērōz, referring to the Sasanid king Khusraw II Parvīz (r. 590–628).

29 Iyās ibn Qabīṣah (d. AD 611 or 612), a chieftain of the Southern Arab tribe of Ṭayyiʾ, assisted the Sasanid Emperor according to Arab legend; see *EI2*, Suppl., 475–476, "Iyās b. Ḳabīṣa" (Ch. Pellat).

30 The names are explained below.

31 Nizār ibn Maʿadd ibn ʿAdnān stands for a large section of the Northern Arabs.

32 He makes an exception for the Northern Arab tribe of Quraysh because of the Prophet (who is sometimes called Aḥmad).

33 Alluding to the Southern Arab female ancestors of ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib, the Prophet's grandfather, according to Ḥamzah al-Iṣfahānī's comment.

Bakr ibn Wā'il have nothing to hold on to
except their stupid woman and their liar.
And the Banū Asad did not loathe their dog,
those slaves of a she-camel and its rider.[34]
Taghlib laments at abandoned campsite remains
but did not avenge the man slain at al-Dhanā'ib.[35]
Their sister was fucked for the lowest dowry,
forcibly, without the nose of her suitor getting bloody.
And Qāsiṭ and their brothers [197]
hoard silent farts in their posteriors.

The author of this book, ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Muʿtazz says: This poem was recited to me by al-Mubarrad, who provided the following explanation. Naʿīṭ is one of the provinces of Yemen. *Adhwā'unā*, "(our ancestors) whose names begin with Dhū", refers to the Tubbaʿs,[36] kings of Ḥimyar, such as Dhū Yazan, Dhū Kalāʿ, and Dhū Aṣbaḥ.[37] Many Ḥimyarites are called thus. The plural of *Dhū* is *Adhwā'* or *Dhawūn*, as in the verse by al-Kumayt:[38]

I do not mean thereby your lowly people,
but I intend your *dhawūn*.

As for *dāna* ("subdued"), one says "So-and-so is in the *dīn* of so-and-so", meaning that he submits to him, as in this verse:[39] {89}

34 Al-Mubarrad, in his commentary below, does not explain *ʿabīdu ʿayrānatin wa-rākibihā*, which remains unclear; see the commentary in Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān*, ii, 8–9 and Wagner, *Abū Nuwās*, 365.

35 This and the next verse are not explained in al-Mubarrad's commentary below. Kulayb ibn Rabīʿah, chief of the tribe of Taghlib, was killed, which started off the War of al-Basūs between Taghlib and Bakr (see above, p. 127). He was killed and buried at al-Dhanā'ib (*Aghānī*, v, 38, Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, s.v.). His brother Muhalhil (reputedly the first poet to compose a *qaṣīdah*) was forced to give his sister in marriage to a member of another tribe for a few leather skins (thus in the commentary in the *Dīwān* and cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 298–299, idem, *ʿUyūn*, iii, 91).

36 *Tabābiʿah*, plural of *tubbaʿ*, a traditional title of the rulers of the ancient South-Arabian kingdom of Ḥimyar.

37 He could have added Dhū Nuwās, all the more so because according to some reports the poet was inspired by this South Arabian (but infamous) king in choosing his nickname (Ibn Manẓūr, *Akhbār*, i, 3–4).

38 On al-Kumayt ibn Zayd (d. c. 126/743) see GAS, ii, 347–349. The verse is quoted in Sībawayh's *Kitāb*, ii, 42–43. *Dhū* means "possessor of" and with the plural *al-dhawūn* al-Kumayt means "men of rank, people of quality".

39 From a poem by the pre-Islamic poet Zuhayr ibn Abī Sulmā (al-Baṭalyawsī, *Sharḥ al-ashʿār*

If you settle in Widd among the Banū Asad,
in the *dīn* of ʿAmr, and Fadak lies between us …

meaning submitting to him. As for "Al-Ḍaḥḥāk was one of us", al-Ḍaḥḥāk was a man of wide repute with many amazing qualities. He is claimed by the Persians as one of them, and this is in fact the truth. In Persian his name is Azdahā, which means "disgrace", for he was a wicked, vicious person. The Arabs arabicised it, calling him al-Ḍaḥḥāk. But his mother was of Qaḥṭān, wherefore the Southern Arabs claim him as belonging to them. Both the Arabs and the Persians assert that the jinn obeyed him and that wild beasts liked him and were his companions, hence the poet's verse "Al-Ḍaḥḥāk was one of us, who was venerated by | al-*khābil* and the wild beasts in their grounds". With *al-khābil* he means the jinnees. As for "we acted harshly (*qasaṭnā*) towards its margraves", one says *qasaṭa*, meaning "he was unjust", and *aqsaṭa*, meaning "he was just". The poet refers to the story of Bahrām Jūr, who asked assistance from al-Nuʿmān, the grandfather of al-Nuʿmān the Younger, when the Persians took his realm away from him at the death of his father, and when his paternal cousins fled.[40] It is a
[198] long story, and this book is not the place to relate it, ‖ as we have said before. As for "we beat the Banū l-Aṣfar", they are the Byzantines.[41] With "when war gave rich milk" he compares war to a she-camel or a ewe that gives much milk when milked. It refers to a long story about Abarwīz who sought assistance from Iyās ibn Qabīṣah al-Ṭāʾī. As for "Ḥātim the Generous is one of their distinctions", this refers to Ḥātim al-Ṭāʾī. The horsemen he mentions are ʿAmr ibn Maʿdī-Karib al-Zubaydī and Qays ibn Makshūḥ al-Murādī.[42] "The two al-Ashtars" are Mālik ibn al-Ḥārith al-Ashtar al-Nakhaʿī, the companion of ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib (peace be upon him), and his son Ibrāhīm ibn al-Ashtar, who killed ʿUbayd Allāh ibn Ziyād.[43] "Zayd of the Horses" refers to Zayd al-Khayl al-Ṭāʾī, whose father was

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al-sittah, ii, 99). Farrāj's edition has *lākinnī*; correct is *wa-lākinnī*. Instead of Widd, all other sources have Jaww (the name of a wadi). ʿAmr is ʿAmr ibn Hind (d. c. AD 570), Lakhmid ruler of al-Ḥīrah.

40 The story of Bahrām Jūr (or Wahrām Gōr, r. AD 420–438) and the Lakhmid ruler al-Nuʿmān is told in e.g. al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, i, 302–304.

41 The Byzantines (al-Rūm, the Romans) are called Banū l-Aṣfar, descendants of "the red, or pale one", viz., Esau, according to the Arab genealogists.

42 ʿAmr ibn Maʿdī-Karib (d. 16/637 or soon after) was a famous chieftain and warrior who converted to Islam, apostatised, was taken prisoner and reconverted, and distinguished himself at the Battle of al-Qādisiyyah in 16/637; Qays ibn Makshūḥ died fighting with ʿAlī at the Battle of Ṣiffīn in 37/657.

43 Mālik ibn al-Ḥārith (d. 37/657 or the following year), called al-Ashtar ("with inverted eyelid") was involved in the sedition against caliph ʿUthmān and his murder; a staunch sup-

Muhalhil; both were the chiefs of their tribe.[44] As for "and slit their skins (*wa-afri jildatahā*)", one says *afraytu* in a negative sense, and *farraytu* in a positive sense; others say that both forms are used negatively and positively.[45] As for "The mother of al-Mahdī … of Hāshim", he means Umm Mūsā bint Manṣūr al-Ḥimyariyyah, who is the mother of the Commander of the Believers, al-Mahdī, son of al-Manṣūr. "The Ashʿaths", who belong to Kindah, are the descendants of al-Ashʿath ibn Qays, who live in Kufa.[46] The Muhallabīs belong to the tribe of al-ʿAtīk and they live in Basra.[47] In the verse "As for Tamīm, they will never rinse | what that slave poured on their moustaches", he refers to Abū Suwāj and his well-known story with Ṣurad ibn Jamrah.[48] ʿUmar ibn Lajaʾ and al-Akhṭal lampooned Jarīr and his tribe alluding to this. Ibn Lajaʾ said:[49]

Yarbūʿ are wiping sordid moustaches
with the slave's sperm, wet and dried.

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porter of ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib, he was reputedly poisoned at the instigation of Muʿāwiyah. His son Ibrāhīm killed the Umayyad governor ʿUbayd Allāh ibn Ziyād (whose army had killed al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī at Karbala) at the battle of al-Jazīr in 67/686 and died while fighting at the battle of Maskin in 72/691.

44 Zayd al-Khayl ("Zayd of the Horses", after his noble horses, d. 9/630) was also a poet, see *GAS*, ii, 223–225.

45 In al-Mubarrad, *Rawḍah*, 169 and 173 (quoting al-Aṣmaʿī) the opposite is said: using *afraytu* in a negative sense (as did Abū Nuwās) is wrong, and the verse is faulted also in al-Marzubānī, *Muwashshaḥ*, 418. But Ḥamzah al-Iṣfahānī, in his commentary on the *Dīwān*, condemns al-Mubarrad and says he is wrong to fault the verse (Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān*, ii, 7).

46 Maʿdī-Karib ibn Qays (d. 40/661), nicknamed al-Ashʿath ("Rumple-hair"), of the Southern Arab tribe of Kindah, was a leading supporter of ʿAlī. His grandson ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Ashʿath (d. 85/704) was involved in many events, notably a revolt against the Umayyad governor al-Ḥajjāj; see *EI2*, iii, 715–719, "Ibn al-Ashʿath" (L. Veccia Vaglieri).

47 Al-ʿAtīk is a branch of the Southern Arab tribe of al-Azd. On the Muhallabids see above, p. 54.

48 Versions of this strange and lurid story are found in Abū ʿUbaydah, *Naqāʾiḍ Jarīr wa-l-Farazdaq*, 207–209; al-Balādhurī, *Jumal*, xi, 388; Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 339–340; *Aghānī*, viii, 307–309; Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān*, ii, 7–8. Abū Suwāj was a *mawlā* of Tamīm. He found out that his wife had an affair with a man of Yarbūʿ (a branch of Tamīm), called Ṣurad ibn Jamrah, who demanded from her two strips of her husband's buttocks to make into sandal straps. Abū Suwāj gave her two strips of a ewe instead. He gave a bowl to two black slaves of his and told them to have intercourse with a slave girl and to collect their sperm to the last drop in the bowl. Then he compelled his wife to mix the contents in Ṣurad's milk. Oddly, Ṣurad is said to have died as a result.

49 ʿUmar ibn Lajaʾ was a minor poet befriended with al-Farazdaq (*GAS*, ii, 364–365). The verses are quoted in Abū ʿUbaydah, *Naqāʾiḍ*, 207; *Aghānī*, viii, 71, 309 (vs. 1).

God has never clothed a man's skin with as much baseness
as what the Kulaybī is wearing.[50]
They wear clothes of baseness that they never take off:
shirts and burnouses on their necks.

[199] And al-Akhṭal said, when Jarīr taunted him for drinking wine:[51]

You blame me for drinking wine, which is the drink of Chosroes!
But your tribe drink something truly amazing.
{90} The sperm of a slave, Abū Suwāj's slave,
is more entitled to be blamed than wine.

With "Ḥājib's bow" he alludes to Ḥājib ibn Zurārah ibn ʿUdus ibn Zayd.[52] He, as a token of his pledge, had handed his bow to Jushn(?),[53] who was Chosroes' governor of the fertile lands of Iraq and the borders of the desert lands of the Bedouin Arabs, when the Banū Tamīm and those who mixed with them tended their flocks in those lands. Ḥājib guaranteed to Chosroes that they would not ravage them. On this, Ḥājib says:

We raised the son of Mā' al-Muzn and Muḥarriq's two sons[54]
until they grew beards and moustaches:
Three kings who grew up in our care,
with whom we overpowered Muḍar—it is no lie!
Jushn swore that he would make peace with anyone
until Ḥājib gave his bow as pawn.

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50 Kulayb is a branch of Yarbūʿ ibn Ḥanẓalah, of Tamīm.

51 Al-Balādhurī, *Jumal*, xi, 388; Abū ʿUbaydah, *Naqā'iḍ*, 208; *Aghānī*, viii, 309 (vs. 1b), but not found in al-Akhṭal's *Dīwān* or in ps.-Abū Tammām, *Naqā'iḍ Jarīr wa-l-Akhṭal*.

52 On this pre-Islamic chief of Tamīm see *EI2*, iii, 49, "Ḥādjib b. Zurāra" (M.J. Kister). The story of his bow is told in many sources, among them al-Balādhurī, *Jumal*, xii, 21; Ibn Qutaybah, *Maʿārif*, 608; al-Thaʿālibī, *Thimār*, 625–626.

53 The text has *Ḥ.shsh* (Ḥashsh, Ḥishsh, Ḥushsh), here and in the following verse by Ḥājib, which is unclear; Eghbal suggests Jushn, which at least sounds Persian. Al-Balādhurī, *Jumal*, xii, 21, says that the emperor's governor was Iyās ibn Qabīṣah, or an unnamed Persian military commander (*ra'is al-asāwirah*).

54 The Lakhmid ruler in al-Ḥīrah, al-Mundhir ibn al-Nuʿmān (first half of 6th century) was called "the son of Mā' al-Samā'" (Heaven's Water, after his mother); here, for metrical reasons, it is Mā' al-Muzn (Rain-cloud's Water), the same in a verse by al-Mumazziq al-ʿAbdī (Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, ii, 163). Muḥarriq, "Burner", is the nickname of his son and successor, the cruel ʿAmr ibn Hind (after his mother).

With "only that Muḥārib of theirs", he means Muḥārib ibn Khaṣafah ibn Qays ʿAylān ibn Muḍar, who are lowly people, proverbial among the Arabs. Al-Quṭāmī says:[55]

> Then, when we had a conversation, I asked her,
> "Who are your tribe?" "A clan of Muḥārib," she replied,
> "Who roast strips of leather, as you see,
> so hungry they are. But the good life is not far off!"[56]

"Eating penises has made them perish": this is something the Banū Fazārah were blamed for.[57] A number of them were travelling. When they became hungry they took the penis of a donkey, roasted it, and ate it. "The Banū Asad did not loathe their dog":[58] There is also a story about the dog and the Banū Asad, similar to the story of the penis and the Banū Fazārah.[59] In "Bakr ibn Wāʾil have nothing to hold on to | except their stupid woman and their liar", ‖ the liar [200]
is Musaylimah, who belonged to the Banū Ḥanīfah,[60] and the stupid woman is Habannaqah al-Qaysī, of the Banū Qays ibn Thaʿlabah, who was a man proverbial for his stupidity.[61] The poet intended "their stupid man" (*bi-aḥmaqihā*), because *bi-ḥamqāʾihā*, which can only refer to a woman, did not fit the metre, so he made a grammatical error. He committed many such breaches.[62] In "And

55 On the poet al-Quṭāmī (d. 101/720) see GAS, ii, 338–339. The verses are in al-Jāḥiẓ, *Bukhalāʾ*, 218 (tr. Serjeant, 197); Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 726 and see *Aghānī*, xxiv, 19, al-Baghdādī, *Khizānah*, vii, 89–90.

56 Instead of *jtyāʿan wa-ʿayshu l-nāsi laysa bi-nāḍibī* other versions have *wa-in kāna rīfu l-nāsi laysa bi-nāḍibī* ("Although the sown land of folk isn't so far further", Serjeant's translation).

57 Versions of the story are told in al-Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān*, iv, 38–39; ps.-al-Jāḥiẓ, *Maḥāsin*, 87–88; al-Maydānī, *Majmaʿ*, i, 156–157; al-Baghdādī, *Khizānah*, iii, 266–267, vii, 521–523.

58 Al-Mubarrad's commentary on this verse should have come after the following comment.

59 See al-Jāḥiẓ, *Bukhalāʾ*, 234–235 (tr. Serjeant, 215–216); Ibn Qutaybah, *ʿUyūn*, iii, 212; idem, *Maʿānī*, 241; Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān*, ii, 8–9. Al-Jāḥiẓ adds that this is one of many cases where a whole tribe is forever blamed or praised on the basis of a single incident in its past.

60 Musaylimah led a revolt against the Muslims immediately after Muḥammad's death in eastern Arabia. He was killed in battle in 11 or 12/632–633. He claimed to be a prophet himself receiving revelations from God and thus he is called the Arch-Liar, al-Kadhdhāb. See e.g. EI2, vii, 664–665 (W. Montgomery Watt).

61 Instances of the stupidity of Yazīd ibn Tharwān al-Qaysī, nicknamed Habannaqah, are given in explanation of the saying *aḥmaq min Habannaqah*, "stupider than Habannaqah" in al-ʿAskarī, *Jamharah*, i, 309–310, al-Maydānī, *Majmaʿ*, i, 281–282, and see al-Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān*, ii, 242–243, ps.-al-Jāḥiẓ, *Maḥāsin*, 133–134.

62 See also al-Mubarrad, *Rawḍah*, 169, in a lengthy passage on Abū Nuwās's errors. On this subject see also the section on him in al-Marzubānī, *Muwashshaḥ*, 407–444. However, it appears that al-Mubarrad himself is wrong: as is pointed out by others (Ḥamzah al-

Qāsiṭ and their brothers | hoard silent farts in their posteriors", their brothers are the tribe of ʿAbd al-Qays, who are reviled for their silent farting; as a poet says:[63]

> The beards of ʿAbd al-Qays are yellow;
> their silent farts are like patches of fog.

There is a long story about this. Here ends the explanation of this poem.

Because Abū Nuwās was such a strong partizan of Qaḥṭān he made many poems on this theme. He says:[64]

> Whenever a Tamīmī comes to you, boasting,
> say: "Never mind about that; but how is it that you eat lizards?
> You boast to princes, foolishly,
> while your piss flows over your legs and heels!"

He also says:[65]

> Leave those remnants that are scattered by the south wind,
> what you remember as new now obliterated by events!
> Abandon to a rider of a she-camel a land
> where noble camel mares and stallions pace![66]

Iṣfahānī in Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān*, ii, 9, Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, v, 391), with the feminine form *ḥamqāʾihā* the poet did mean a woman, Dughah, who is also proverbial for stupidity, see ps.-al-Jāḥiẓ, *Maḥāsin*, 134; al-ʿAskarī, *Jamharah*, i, 48; al-Maydānī, *Majmaʿ*, i, 283; Abū ʿUbayd al-Bakrī, *Faṣl al-maqāl*, 183. She belonged to ʿIjl, a branch of Bakr ibn Wāʾil. Unaware of being pregnant, she believed that she was defecating when giving birth, and asked her mother (or another wife of her husband), "Can a turd open its mouth?"

63 The poet is al-Akhṭal (*Dīwān*, 49), also in al-ʿAskarī, *Jamharah*, i, 312. On this reputation of ʿAbd al-Qays see also e.g. *Aghānī*, xiii, 94; al-Tawḥīdī, *Baṣāʾir*, vi, 197.

64 *Dīwān*, ii, 13 (in a poem of 29 vss.), also al-Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥayawān*, vi, 102. Vs. 1 is often quoted in works on rhetoric since Ibn al-Muʿtazz quotes it in his *Badīʿ* (63) as an example of *hazl yurādu bihi l-jidd*, "jesting with a serious intent".

65 They are vss. 1–2, 4–5, 3, 6–7, 19a + 21b, 17–18, 20 of a poem of 21 vss., *Dīwān*, iii, 43–47, in the section on Bacchic poetry. See also al-Bāqillānī, *Iʿjāz*, 280. German translation in Wagner, *Abū Nuwās*, 295–296, for a few verses in rhyming English, see Nicholson, *History*, 286. This and the following poem are not so much about Qaḥṭān as against the Bedouin Arabs and Bedouin life in general, as contrasted with urban luxury and refinement.

66 I find conflicting information on how to refer to female and male camels: either "cow / bull" or "mare / stallion". Most Arabists seem to use "she-camel" or "(camel) mare" for the female, no doubt because it sounds nobler, more horse-like, than "cow".

Do not take your enjoyment or a good life
from the Bedouins, for their "good life" is barren.
Leave the milk that their men drink
among whom a fine life is a strange thing,[67]
In a land where giant milkweed grows and acacia,
and where the game is mostly dog and wolf.[68]
If the milk curdles, piss on it! {91} [201]
Don't worry, there's not sin in it.
But better than that is a pure, cool wine,
in a cup brought round by a smart wine-pourer.
You, woman blaming me! I have long strayed from the right path,
so now you may tear your dress's collar, but I shall not repent.
That is the life! Not the shrubs of the Bedouins.
That is the life! Not milk curdled and fresh.
How can Bedouin life be compared with Chosroes's Arch,[69]
how can cattle pens compare with hippodromes?
You revile me for my sins, but which freeborn young man
is without sins?

Among Abū Nuwās's praiseworthy traits that are mentioned is what Aḥmad ibn Abī ʿĀmir told me, who said: Salmān Shaḥṭah told me:[70] Abū Nuwās was learned and a legal expert. He knew about religious rulings and issuing legal opinions.[71] He had knowledge of the differences between legal schools. He had a sound memory of Hadith and insight in its methods. He knew about the abrogating and abrogated texts of the Qur'an,[72] and about its unambiguous and ambiguous verses. He was educated in Basra, which at the time was the place

67 Farrāj's *baytuhumū* is an error for *baynahumū* (*Dīwān*: *ʿindahumū*).

68 Eating dog or wolf is forbidden in Islam. Instead of "dog" (*kalb*) the *Dīwān* has "hyena" (*ḍabuʿ*). Eating hyena (which cannot have been very common) is allowed to Muslims according to al-Shāfiʿī and Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, and merely disapproved by other authorities, see e.g. al-Damīrī, *Ḥayāt al-ḥayawān*, i, 82.

69 Īwān Kisrā, the famous reception hall of the Sasanid palace at Ctesiphon in Iraq, partially still standing.

70 Instead of Shaḥṭah (vowelling uncertain) it is Sakhṭah in Abū Hiffān, *Akhbār*, 108 and al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, viii, 491. In Ḥamzah al-Iṣfahānī's chapter on Abū Nuwās's *akhbār* it is Sulaymān ibn Sakhṭah (Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān*, v, 482, 506; see also ii, 177, 284, iv, 43, 82). He has not been identified.

71 *Al-aḥkām* (the five legal categories from forbidden to obligatory) *wa-l-futyā* (the issuing of fatwas).

72 See *EI2*, vii, 1009–1012, "Naskh" (J. Burton), on the fact that some parts of the canonical Qur'an are deemed to have been superseded or replaced by other parts, revealed later.

on God's earth with the most learning, legal scholarship, and literary culture. More than anyone he had memorized the poems of the ancients, those straddling the pre-Islamic period and Islam, those of the early Islamic poets, and the moderns.

Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Qaṣṣār told me: Yūsuf ibn al-Dāyah told me:[73] Abū Nuwās said to me, "I have memorised seven hundred poems in *rajaz* metre that are hard to find among people, besides the well-known poems."[74] After staying with Wālibah ibn al-Ḥubāb he attached himself to Khalaf al-Aḥmar. Khalaf was unique in matters of poetry. When Abū Nuwās had finished perfecting these arts he applied himself wholly to anecdotes, libertinism, and pleasantries, of which he memorised a lot, until he had become most knowledgeable about these things. Only then did he start composing poetry, excelling his peers and surpassing his contemporaries. Subsequently, he attached himself to viziers and prominent people, sitting in their assemblies and socialising with them. From them he learned refined behaviour and neatness, becoming
[202] a model among people. He was loved by high and low. But he used ‖ to make efforts to flee from caliphs and princes. [When reproved][75] on account of this, he would say, "Sitting with such persons can only be endured by master poets who are wholly devoted to them, who move or speak only at their command. By God, I feel as if I am sitting on hot embers when I enter into their presence, until I can leave and join my friends and drinking companions. When I am with those others I am not my own master."

Ismāʿīl ibn Ḥarb told me: Saʿd ibn Khuzaym informed me that Jaʿfar al-Barmakī asked Saʿīd ibn Wahb:[76] "Where was Abū Nuwās educated?" He answered, "In the town of Basra." Abū ʿAmr told me, on the authority of Abū Diʿāmah: Abū ʿAmr al-Shaybānī said,[77] "Were it not for all the obscenities of Abū Nuwās's verse we would use it as linguistic evidence, for it is well made."[78]

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73 See Ḥamzah al-Iṣfahānī in Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān*, v, 483.

74 See also the report that Khalaf al-Aḥmar told him to memorise one thousand poems. When this was accomplished, he was told to forget them all, which (with some effort) he also managed to do. Only then was he allowed to compose poetry himself (Ibn Manẓūr, *Akhbār*, i, 55).

75 Added from the *Mukhtaṣar* and the *Dīwān*.

76 Saʿīd ibn Wahb (d. 209/824), a state secretary attached to the Barmakids; see al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xv, 272–273. He was also a poet, see *GAS*, ii, 516–517.

77 Abū ʿAmr Isḥāq ibn Mirār al-Shaybānī (d. c. 213/828), Kufan lexicographer, see *EI2*, ix, 394–395, "al-Shaybānī, Abū ʿAmr" (K. Versteegh).

78 As a general rule, only pre-modern poetry could be used as linguistic evidence for correct Arabic; but obscenities in older poetry have clearly not much deterred the lexicographers, judging by their lexicons and treatises.

Among the stories of Abū Nuwās with Abān al-Lāḥiqī is what I was told by al-Qāsim ibn Dāwūd, who said: Ibn Abī l-Mundhir told me:[79] Abān al-Lāḥiqī was a poet and a wit, who composed panegyrics on the Barmakids, especially Jaʿfar. He hardly ever left his side. Whenever the Barmakids wanted to distribute money among poets, they charged him with carrying it out. At their orders he was given money to distribute among them.[80] This distribution was an important office to him.[81] He gave orders for Abū Nuwās to be given an inferior dirham, with a message saying, "I give every poet according to his rank; and this is what you are worth."[82] Abū Nuwās was furious. When Abān recited his poem with rhyme letter Ḥ, in which he describes himself, with a patchwork of lies, to Jaʿfar ibn ‖ Yaḥyā—and this is the poem:[83] {92}

I am the man the Emir needs, one of the treasures
of the Emir, with much profit:
Chancery official, accountant, man of letters, orator,
sincere counsellor, worth more than all counsellors,
Proficient poet, finer and lighter than the downy feathers [203]
one finds beneath the wing.
If the Emir saw me he would see in me
an energetic, expert man, ringing like a bell![84]
A lank beard, a long nose,
burning like the flame of a lamp.
I am neither excessively tall nor lowly,[85]
not short or squat,

79 Abān al-Lāḥiqī has an entry below, § 38.

80 See also Abū Hiffān, *Akhbār*, 18 and *Aghānī*, xxiii, 156 (where it is Jaʿfar's father Yaḥyā who is said to have appointed Abān).

81 Translation uncertain; Farrāj reads *wa-kāna kathīran lahū khaṭar, fa-farraqahu*; the MS seems to have *wa-kāna kathīr lahū khaṭar bi-tafriqatihī*.

82 In the version of Abū Hiffān, *Akhbār*, 18, Abū Nuwās is given two dirhams, still a trifling sum.

83 The sentence beginning with "When Abān recited" is left incomplete. For various versions of the poem see Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān*, i, 24–25; al-Ṣūlī, *Awrāq*, i, 4–5; Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, iv, 203–204; *Aghānī*, xxiii, 160; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, xiv, 296; Ibn al-Abbār, *Iʿtāb*, 77–79. For a German translation see Wagner, *Abū Nuwās*, 144–145, for an English translation of the version in al-Ṣūlī, *Awrāq*, i, 4–5 see Fariq, "The Poetry of Abān al-Lāḥiqī", 48–49 and Gruendler, "Meeting the Patron", 82–83.

84 Instead of *ka-l-juljuli l-ṣayyāḥī* some other sources have *ka-l-bulbuli l-ṣayyāḥī*, "like a loudly singing nightingale", here and in Abū Nuwās's rejoinder, whose second verse below suggests that this may be the better reading.

85 I prefer reading *mustakīn* (with the *Mukhtaṣar*) instead of *mustakinn* ("hiding oneself"), which is also possible.

The most auspicious bird seen on a day of hunting
when I am called, morning or evening,
The man with most knowledge of raptors,
hounds, and pretty, attractive maidens.

—When Abū Nuwās heard this poem he said, "I swear to God, I shall make him known to himself!" And he recited:[86]

More deserving of having bad luck
is surely the one called Ringing Bell.
When he sang for them they found out
that his voice is mute, not eloquent.
Then, he compared himself in[87] fineness and lightness
to feathers found beneath the wing:
In fact, the lofty summits of Mount Raḍwā
are, compared with him, as light as prayer beads.
There are only two things in you that you said,
apart from your squat physique:
A lank beard, a long nose;
all the rest is dust scattered by the wind.
In you there is something that makes princes foolish
and which mocks with noble lords.
In you there is arrogance, intense conceitedness,
and an ambition surpassing all ambitions,
With insipid wit,[88] glaring lies, arrogant,
repetitive in conversation, with poor jokes.

[204] When the poem reached al-Lāḥiqī he was dismayed, knowing full well that if it were to come to the knowledge of the Barmakids he would be overthrown. He regretted what he had done and sent a message to Abū Nuwās, saying, "Do not make it public; name your price!"[89] But Abū Nuwās sent a reply saying, "It

86 Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān*, i, 26; al-Ṣūlī, *Awrāq*, i, 22–23; Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, iv, 204–205; Ibn al-Abbār, *Iʿtāb*, 79–80; German translation in Wagner, *Abū Nuwās*, 145. The poem has the same metre and rhyme.

87 In Arabic, "heavy" (*thaqīl*) can also mean "boring, insufferable, dull".

88 Reading, with the *Mukhtaṣar* and other sources, *al-ẓarf* instead of *al-ṭarf*, as in the editions of Farrāj and al-Ṭabbāʿ.

89 In the version of *ʿIqd* Abān offers 1,000,000 dirhams, and Abū Nuwās responds that he would not accept 100,000,000 dirhams (in *Iʿtāb* the amounts are smaller by a factor of one thousand, still large sums).

must be made public, even if you gave me the whole world. Just put up with the heat of the branding iron and know your own worth!" When Jaʿfar heard Abū Nuwās's poem on al-Lāḥiqī he said, "By God! He has accused him[90] of fifty traits, not one of which would be accepted by the lower classes, let alone that princes could accept them!"[91] People said to him, "My lord, he has lied to you!" But Jaʿfar quoted the verse:[92]

> Those words were said, whether true or false;
> so what is your excuse for something that is said?

After that, Abān was like a slave to Abū Nuwās; whenever he met him, he would extol him.

Ibrāhīm ibn al-Khaṣīb told me: Ibn Abī l-Mundhir informed me, saying:[93] "The popularity of Abū Nuwās's poetry is due to its smoothness and its beautiful expressions. In addition, it contains many original ideas. It is these two things that are demanded from poetry."

Muḥammad ibn Ziyād ibn Muḥammad told me, on the authority of Abū Hiffān, who said, "Abū Nuwās said to me, 'Greediness is contemptible in matters of food, but virtuous in matters of belles-lettres.[94] Everyone who craves something and has a lot of it, loses his appetite and is satisfied, except in the case of belles-lettres. The more one knows of it, ‖ the more one's greediness and {93}
appetite and one's delving in it increase.'"

Aḥmad ibn Salmān told me: al-Yuʾyuʾ told me, saying,[95] "I heard Abū Nuwās say, 'An erudite man is never lost, for he can sit in the company of prominent people and princes in any town he visits. There is no better combination than intellect and erudition'".

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90 I read *qadhafahū* rather than *qarrafahū* (Farrāj).

91 *ʿIqd*: "He has been accused of five things in a single verse, of which none but an ignorant man would accept one" (apparently alluding to the last verse).

92 Often quoted; attributed to an unnamed poet addressing the pre-Islamic king Abū Qābūs al-Nuʿmān ibn al-Mundhir in Sībawayh, *Kitāb*, i, 131; attributed to the king himself in al-Jāḥiẓ, *Burṣān*, 93; al-Mufaḍḍal, *Fākhir*, 182, 184; *Aghānī*, xv, 366, xvii, 187; Abū ʿUbayd al-Bakrī, *Faṣl al-maqāl*, 92; al-ʿAskarī, *Jamharah*, ii, 100; al-Maydānī, *Majmaʿ*, ii, 124–125.

93 Ḥamzah al-Iṣfahānī paraphrases rather than quotes the following statement, saying (Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān*, i, 14) that it is from "'Abd Allāh ibn al-Muʿtazz's book called *A Selection from the Poems of the Moderns* (*al-Ikhtiyār min ashʿār al-muḥdathīn*)".

94 As is often the case, *adab* cannot properly be rendered with one word ("good breeding, good conduct, erudition, culture, literature …").

95 He is apparently Muḥammad ibn Ziyād al-Ziyādī, nicknamed Yuʾyuʾ (a kind of falcon), who is viciously lampooned by Abū Nuwās (*Dīwān*, ii, 54, 111–112).

[Some[96] people were discussing the best Arabic verse on love. Someone said, "It is this, by Abū Nuwās:[97]

Love that takes pains, a loved one who plays:
Thus you are tormented between the two."

And then, on the best description of wine, he said, "Abū Nuwās, who said,[98]

Flaring up as an oil lamp, while the wine-pourer mixed it;
it stood in the room as a lamp for the lamp.
Although we knew, we almost doubted, asking him,
'Is that fire from our wine, or the wine from our fire?' "]

[205] ʿAlī ibn Isḥāq told me: Ibn Abī Khalṣah told me:[99] "I saw Abū Nuwās standing on the bridge in the company of young man and a girl;[100] I never saw more beautiful people than those two. He was mounted on a brisk donkey. 'Hey, Abū ʿAlī!' I said, "Why are you standing there? And who are those two with you?" 'Al-Khaṣīb[101] gave me this donkey to ride on,' he answered, 'and he gave me this boy and this girl. What do you think of them?' I said, 'Fit only for princes!' 'You are right,' he said, 'but they are a mixed blessing.' 'How so?' I asked. He replied, 'I fear that if I leave the boy with the girl he will make me a cuckold. Any idea what I should do?' I said, 'Put the girl in the household of one of your friends, someone you trust, and you can visit her whenever you want.' He said, 'I would be afraid to put the wolf among the sheep!'[102] Then we parted. After some days we met again, and he said to me, 'We asked your advice about those two but

96 The bracketed passage is taken from the *Mukhtaṣar* (ed. Farrāj, Appendix, 434–435).

97 See al-Bayhaqī, *Maḥāsin*, 245, where the two *rajaz* verses are quoted without attribution by Muḥammad ibn al-Jahm, asked by al-Maʾmūn about the best verse on love. It is not in Abū Nuwās's *Dīwān*; see Wagner, *Abū Nuwās in der Nebenüberlieferung*, 36.

98 Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān*, iii, 93.

99 For another version of this story see Ibn Manẓūr, *Akhbār*, i, 241; for a very similar story, in which Abū Nuwās has his way with both the boy and the girl, and with "Muḥammad ibn Bashīr the poet" (probably meaning Muḥammad ibn Yasīr) instead of Ibn Abī Khalṣah, see Ḥamzah al-Iṣfahānī's *Akhbār* in Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān*, v, 508–509.

100 *Ghulām wa-jāriyah* could also mean: "a white slave and a slave girl (or concubine)".

101 Abū Nuwās spent some time (probably 190–191/805–807) in Egypt, patronised by al-Khaṣīb ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd, inspector of the land tax (on him see al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xiii, 322–324).

102 Literally, "to ask the wolf to be shepherd"; cf. the proverb "He who asks the wolf to be shepherd does wrong" (al-Maydānī, *Majmaʿ*, ii, 356–357).

it was no good. But when I had left you the right thing suddenly came to my tongue and my heart.' 'What did you do?' I asked. 'I married the boy to the girl and cuckolded him with her.' I replied, 'The matter was legally permissible to you, and you turned it into something forbidden!' 'You stupid,' he said, 'Did I ask your advice on a legally permissible matter or did I ask you what I should do?' I replied, 'God's curse on you! You surely know how to find your way to any abomination!'"

The following are some of the Basran verses composed by Abū Nuwās:[103]

The place of prayer is effaced, the sand-hills are deserted
by me, as are al-Mirbad and al-Labab.[104]
Effaced is the mosque in which manly virtue and religion[105]
were found together, as are the courtyards and wide spaces,
Dwellings where I lived as a youth
until grey hair appeared on my cheeks,
Among young men like swords, stirred
by the prime of youth, adorned with good breeding.
Then Time disturbed them and they dispersed
like the Sabaeans, through the lands, split up.[106]

The Baghdadis assert that he composed these verses in Baghdad, and it is indeed fitting that he should ‖ have lamented his Basran friends in Baghdad, [206] because he says in the same poem:

When I was certain that their departure
would not, as long as I lived, be reversed,
I had to bear it, as nobody had borne it,
and sundry ambitions divided me.[107]

103 Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān*, iii, 29–30 (vss. 1–5, 7–8 of a wine poem of 25 vss.); German translation in Wagner, *Abū Nuwās*, 297, English translations e.g. in Hamori, *The Art*, 114–116; Kennedy, *The Wine Song*, 265.

104 Al-Mirbad and al-Labab are places in Basra, the former being a famous marketplace (see *EI2*, vii, 113–114, "al-Mirbad" [Ch. Pellat]). The poet parodies the motif of abandoned campsites (which are traditionally set in the desert, not urban) abandoned by the beloved (not the poet as here).

105 The *Dīwān* has *majd*, "glory" instead of *dīn*, "religion".

106 Alluding to the dispersion of the pre-Islamic Sabaeans in Yemen after the breach of the great dam at Ma'rib/Mārib (see *EI2*, vi, 559–567, "Mārib" [W.W. Müller]).

107 As Hamori (*The Art*, 116) says, there seems to be a pun in *ma'ārib* ("ambitions, desires") and the dam at Ma'rib.

Of his Basran poetry the following verses are widely known:[108]

There was a house[109] of drinking mates, who left it, travelling at night,
and where there are recent and effaced traces of them,
Places where wineskins were dragged on the earth,
and bunches of fragrant herbs, freshly plucked or dried,
Where I detained my friends and renewed my acquaintance—
for I would indeed detain men like those!
We stayed there a day, another day, and a third,
and yet one more day, the day of departure being the fifth,
While wine in a gold cup was going round for us,
Persia having given it pictures in various forms,
{94} With Chosroes at the bottom, and on the sides
oryxes, with horsemen lying in wait with their bows;
The wine reaching to where they buttoned their shirts,
and the water to where their hoods were wound.

Al-Minqarī told me, on the authority of Yūsuf ibn al-Dāyah, who said, I was going around in the month of Ramadan with Abū Nuwās and some of our friends, breaking the fast together every evening. One evening we came past the mosque of al-Salūlī, where his son was leading the *tarāwīḥ* prayers with the people.[110] He was one of the handsomest people with a most beautiful face. Abū Nuwās was struck. "I shall not leave until our session is finished", he said. It was an evening when the entire Qur'an was recited. When the boy recited,[111] "*Have you seen him who belies the Judgement?*" Abū Nuwās said,[112]

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108 Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān*, iii, 183–184; al-Ḥuṣrī, *Zahr*, 794–795; Ibn Manẓūr, *Akhbār*, i, 39–41. Vss. 4–7 in al-Mubarrad, *Kāmil*, ii, 436; vss. 5–7 in Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 811; Ibn al-Muʿtazz, *Fuṣūl al-tamāthīl*, 52; Ibn Ṭabāṭabā, *ʿIyār*, 124–125. Al-Jāḥiẓ is reputed to have said, "I don't know any poem that is better than Abū Nuwās's 'In many a house of drinking companions (…)'" (*Dīwān*, iii, 184–185, and cf. al-Ḥuṣrī, *Zahr*, 795, Ibn Manẓūr, *Akhbār*, i, 41).

109 The introductory particle *wa-* followed by an indefinite genitive (*wāw rubba*), common in poetry but not found in prose, is traditionally interpreted as "many a …", but often it seems to refer to a single object or event (as here), in which case it could also be translated as "often I think of …"

110 The mosque of al-Salūlī is in Baghdad (al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, vi, 382); he or his son have not been identified. The *ṣalāt al-tarāwīḥ* is a ritual prayer performed at night in Ramadan.

111 Q al-Māʿūn 107:1 (vs. 2 following in the poem). The word *dīn*, most often "religion", is here traditionally interpreted as the Last Judgement.

112 *Dīwān*, v, 249; also al-Bāqillānī, *Iʿjāz*, 52 and some later works, as an example of *taḍmīn*,

He recited in public, in order to break my heart
(and passion will break even a resolute heart):
"Have you seen him who belies the Judgement?
That is the one who pushes away the orphan."

They marvelled at his extemporising.

Ibrāhīm ibn Ḥarb al-Kūfī told me: Ibn al-Dāyah told me:[113] Abū Nuwās, [207]
Muslim ibn al-Walīd and al-Khalīʿ[114] once gathered in a session with some other poets. One of them said, "Which one of you can give me a verse of poetry that contains a verse of the Qur'an? He can name his reward!" They started to think, and Abū Nuwās was the first to come forward, saying:[115]

Young men in a session, their faces
are their fragrant herbs; they are safe from annoyance.
Its shades nearby over them,
its clusters of fruit hung low.

They marvelled at this and were dumbfounded; no one else could come up with anything. Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb said, Some time later I heard this verse by Diʿbil that I admired:[116]

He will shame them and give you victory over them,
and He will heal the hearts of a people who believe.

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quotation (the Qur'anic sentences happen to scan in *khafīf* metre; theologians stress that this does not mean that the Qur'an contains poetry). In Wagner, *Abū Nuwās in der Nebenüberlieferung*, 179–180 a variant with different rhyme (*-īm* instead of *-ū/īmā*) is traced only to a work by al-Suyūṭī. For more verses by Abū Nuwās containing Qur'anic phrases see his *Dīwān*, v, 248–253; Sanni, *The Arabic Theory of Prosification and Versification*, 163–167.

113 Different versions of the following are in Abū Hiffān, *Akhbār*, 68, Ḥamzah al-Iṣfahānī in Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān*, v, 480–481.

114 On Muslim ibn al-Walīd see below, §37; on al-Khalīʿ ("the Rake", viz. al-Ḥusayn ibn al-Ḍaḥḥāk) see below, §46.

115 In addition to the references in the preceding note, see Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān*, v, 249; al-Bāqillānī, *Iʿjāz*, 52; al-Zarkashī, *Burhān*, ii, 214; Ibn Manẓūr, *Akhbār*, ii, 53. The second verse contains Q al-Insān 76:14 (a description of Paradise), with only a slight change (*ʿalayhimū*, for metrical reasons, instead of *ʿalayhim*).

116 Diʿbil has an entry below, §45. The verse is in his *Dīwān*, 295 (Ibn al-Muʿtazz's *Ṭabaqāt* being its only source, see p. 290); it contains part of Q al-Tawbah 9:14, which begins with *Fight them and God will punish them at your hands*. Again, the quotation is minimally adapted to metre and rhyme: *wa-yukhzihimū* and *muʾminīnā* instead of *wa-yukhzihim* and *muʾminīna*.

Naṣr ibn Muḥammad told me: Ibn Abī Shaqīqah al-Warrāq informed me that the poets used to meet in his father's shop[117] in Baghdad. One day Abū l-ʿAtāhiyah[118] attended too. He took a notebook and wrote on the back, reciting at the same time:[119]

How strange it is, that one should disobey God,
or that anybody should deny His existence!
God has in everything that is moving
or motionless a witness.
In everything He has a sign
that shows that He is One.

The following day Abū Nuwās came along. He sat down and talked for a while. Then his eye fell on that notebook and he read the verses, "Whose are they?" he asked. "I wish I could give all my verse to have composed them!" We said, "They are by Abū l-ʿAtāhiyah." Then he wrote beneath them:[120]

Praise be to Him who created His creation
weak and despicable!
He then drove it from one abode
to another, firm abode.
[208] It changes from creation to creation
within veils, concealed from the eyes.[121]

The next day Abū l-ʿAtāhiyah turned up again. "Whose are these verses?" he asked, "I wish I could give all my verse to have composed them!" We said, "Abū Nuwās!", and we were amazed about how they happened to say the same thing.

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117 Presumably a bookshop (among the meanings of *warrāq* are "paper seller", "copyist", and "bookseller"). For the story see also Ḥamzah al-Iṣfahānī in Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān*, v, 490–491; al-Ḥuṣrī, *Zahr*, 387; Ibn ʿAsākir *Tārīkh*, xiii, 453–454.

118 See entry § 36 below.

119 In addition to the references in note 113 above see Abū l-ʿAtāhiyah, *Dīwān*, 104; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, vii, 229; *Aghānī*, iv, 35 (vss. 1, 3); attributed to Abū Nuwās in ps.-al-Jāḥiẓ, *Maḥāsin*, 183, anonymously in al-Bayhaqī, *Maḥāsin*, 355. Vs. 3 is attributed to Abū Nuwās in Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, vii, 138. This verse is very often quoted in religious works. See Wagner, *Abū Nuwās in der Nebenüberlieferung*, 72–73.

120 In addition to the references in note 113 above see Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān*, ii, 172; ps.-al-Jāḥiẓ, *Maḥāsin*, 103; al-Āmidī, *Muwāzanah*, i, 81–82; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh*, xiii, 459.

121 Alluding to Q al-Nisāʾ 4:28: *Man was created weak* and Q al-Mursalāt 77:20–21: *Did We not create you from a despicable water, which We then placed in a firm abode?* (The passage deals with the growth of a human foetus).

Abū l-Najm told me:[122] ‖ I have heard that when Abū Nuwās was in the elementary school—he was a charming, pretty boy—a young girl with a radiant face came past. She talked and jested with him for a while. Then she threw him an apple of which she had taken a bite, and she left. Then he said, {95}

Apple tree, may you never fear drying up!
No, and may you always be a model of what is aimed for!
It[123] receives fragrance when it is tasted
but even without fragrance it is acceptable.
It promised me a kiss from my master,
and it claimed it from my master.[124]
That bite is not a blemish of it:
rather, it is asking for kisses.[125]

It is said that it was these verses that endeared Abū Nuwās to Wālibah ibn al-Ḥubāb, to the extent that he adopted him as his servant, educated him, and taught him. It is also said that what made Abū Nuwās keen to be in Wālibah's company were the following two verses by Wālibah:[126]

She has—but it is no sin of hers—my love
that is like the tips of lances;
It wounds the heart, always;
my heart is wounded on all sides.

He admired them, finding them excellent;[127] it made him want to compose poetry himself. It is, indeed, poetry that is superior to magic.

Abū Yaʿqūb Isḥāq ibn Sayyār told me: the majority of Abū Nuwās's companions, among them ʿAbd Allāh ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥarb, known as Abū Hiffān,[128] told [209]

122 For the story see Ḥamzah in Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān*, v, 481–482; the verses also in iv, 5.

123 The subject is the apple, as appears from a verse in the *Dīwān* omitted here.

124 The version of the *Dīwān*, which makes more sense, has *ḥibbatī* instead of *sayyidī*: "It promised me a kiss from my dear girl and my dear girl claimed ten kisses."

125 Instead of *su'ālun li-l-qubal* the *Dīwān* and the *Mukhtaṣar* have *rasūlun li-l-qubal*, "a messenger for kisses".

126 See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, iii, 539; *Aghānī*, xviii, 99–100; Ibn Manẓūr, *Akhbār*, i, 8; al-Jurjānī, *Kināyāt*, 43; Ibn Shākir, *Fawāt*, iv, 247. Abū Nuwās apparently liked them so much that he incorporated them in a poem of 14 verses on his girlfriend ʿInān (*Dīwān*, iv, 40).

127 Following Farrāj's suggestion of interpreting *wa-jaz(z)alahumā* as *wa-stajzalahumā*. But the MS could also be read as *wa-kharra lahū* (not *lahumā*): "he prostrated himself for him (in admiration)".

128 The following description of a *majlis* is not found in the extant text of Abū Hiffān's *Akhbār*

me that an assembly room was built for the Deposed One[129] the like of which was never seen by Arabs or non-Arabs. There were all kinds of images in it.[130] Its ceiling, walls, and doors were gilded. On the doors were curtains dyed with safflower and embroidered with gold, as were the carpets on the floor. When the Caliph knew that everything was ready he chose a day, giving orders that boon companions and poets should be told to attend on the morning of that day, to drink with him there. No one failed to turn up. Among those present was Abū Nuwās. When they entered they saw an edifice such as nobody had ever seen or heard of. There was a portico, lofty, spacious, wide, in which the eyes could roam, plastered white like an egg and then gilded with pure gold contrasting with lapis lazuli; with large doors, their thick panels glittering with gold nails, the heads of which were inlaid with precious stones. The hall had furniture coloured as if with blood, decorated with pictures and images in gold. There were piles of grey ambergris, crystalline camphor, paste of musk, kinds of fruits, of incense, and various decorations. They uttered blessings on al-Amīn and praised him. They took their seats, according to their ranks and their status with him. Then he turned to them and said, "I want to enjoy being in this hall together with you and drink with you. You see how beautiful it is. Now do not
[210] spoil my pleasure ‖ with formality, do not ruffle my joy by being inhibited, but relax, converse, and behave as freely as you wish, for that is how life should be lived!" They all replied, "Commander of the Believers, may birds of good omen, lucky stars, rising good fortune, lofty command, victory, and success all be with you! May you, Commander of the Believers, be granted success for ever!" Then, after they had eaten, they were served wine red as saffron, purer in pleasure
{96} than being with one's beloved, sweeter smelling than one's loved one's breath. ‖ Wine-pourers like full moons stood in attendance with cups like stars and went round among them, while [singing-girls behind][131] curtains set to apply their lutes. They drank together with the Caliph from the beginning of the day until the end, with conversation variegated like flowerbeds in a garden, with recit-

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Abī Nuwās, but the editor has added it in an appendix, pp. 129–131. For a different version see Ḥamzah's reports in Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān*, v, 476–478 (where the transmitter's name is Isḥāq ibn Sinān instead of Isḥāq ibn Sayyār), translated in Wagner, *Abū Nuwās*, 146–147. Both versions, flowery as they are, are devoid of *saj'*, rhyming prose, which would be almost obligatory in similar descriptions written in later times.

129 *Al-Makhlū'*, viz., Muḥammad al-Amīn, who was deposed by his half-brother 'Abd Allāh al-Ma'mūn in 196/812 towards the end of the civil war and was killed the next year.

130 Ḥamzah's text has "images that remained of the Persians (*taṣāwīr allatī baqiyat min āthār al-Furs*)", suggesting they may have been Sasanian sculptures or paintings on walls.

131 The addition, suggested by Farrāj, is confirmed by Ḥamzah's version ("… while they were moved by the songs of slave girls secluded behind curtains").

ations like pearls strung together with gold beads, and with listening to music that revived souls and prolonged lifetimes. At the end of the day al-Amīn let ten thousand dinars be brought on platters.[132] At his command they were strewn upon them and they took what they could, while wine was still being brought around to them, in large or small cups, unmixed or mixed with water. No one was prevented from taking whatever they wanted, or frowned upon for refusing anything. He was a good drinker and they had to hold their own with him, until he was inebriated and fell asleep. Then all those in the assembly also fell asleep, except Abū Nuwās, who spent the night[133] where he sat, drinking by himself. At daybreak he approached Muḥammad and said, "Commander of the Believers!" The Caliph replied, "At your service, O best of boon companions!" "Lord of the world's inhabitants," said Abū Nuwās, "don't you notice how gentle the breeze is, how pleasant the north wind, how cool this dawn, how healthy this temperate air and pure atmosphere, how delightful this light?" When Muḥammad heard this description he sat upright. "Abū Nuwās!" he said, "I could not possibly drink more or spend more time staying awake. But you have pleased me with your description in prose; now invigorate me with a versified version for the drinkers!" Then the poet recited:[134]

Wake up your drinking companion, who has fallen asleep,
  and he'll pour you a drink, shortly before dawn!
Unmixed wine, its rays, in the hand
  of the drinker, like a firebrand.
It leaves a man as if [211]
  there is a dumbness on his tongue:
One calls him, he raises his head,
  but just as he lifts it, it lolls back.
It is poured for you by a lad wearing a tunic,
  who distracts as well as annoys one who holds back;[135]
He has effeminate languid eyelids; he is
  like a gazelle slumbering in meadows.

132 *Ṣawānī* (pl. of *ṣīniyyah*) is derived from al-Ṣīn, "China", and could refer to porcelain plates and platters (see *EI2*, ix, 647–648, "Ṣīnī" [J. Carswell]), but also to metal plates.

133 I am not sure that it is necessary to emend *bayyata* to *thabata* ("stayed put" or "held his own"), as did Farrāj.

134 Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān*, i, 138–139, v, 477–478; Ibn Abī ʿAwn, *Tashbīhāt*, 185 (vss. 1–4); German translation in Wagner, *Abū Nuwās*, 252.

135 Perhaps meaning someone who does not drink enough or not fast enough; cf. Wagner: "der (den Wein zu lange) stehen läßt".

—The Imam, Muḥammad, is a light
for the religion, one from which light is taken.
Five have inherited the caliphate
and with the best, the sixth of them, the number is six![136]
Full moons weep when he laughs
and the sword laughs when he frowns.

The Deposed One was happy and called for wine, which they drank together.

There are many choice poems preferred by understanding people, just as there are also bad poems that they reject. We shall, however, quote those poems that are not well-known among the larger public, and leave aside the well-known ones. Thus his poem with rhyme letter R, composed for al-Khaṣīb:[137]

Neighbour woman of our two houses,[138] your father is jealous!
What one hopes is easy with you is in fact difficult …

although one of his treasured poems, is found with everybody, unlike the following poem by him with rhyme letter M, which does not fall short of it in beauty and excellence, yet is known only to the elite:[139]

O abode! What have the days done to you!
It has not left in you any cheer to be sought.[140]
Time has been vicious to those I used to know,
who dwelled in you. There is viciousness in Time.[141]

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136 Al-Amīn was the sixth Abbasid caliph. Al-Mubarrad did not like the verse (*laysa bi-shay'*, "It is nothing"), see al-Mubarrad, *Rawḍah*, 172, al-Marzubānī, *Muwashshaḥ*, 417. Ibn al-Athīr, *Mathal*, iii, 183 mentions that "someone who thinks himself knowledgeable" condemned this verse, thinking that there is a sly allusion to Q al-Kahf 18:22, on the sleepers of Ephesus: *And they will say, 'Five, and their dog was the sixth of them'*. Ibn al-Athīr, however, rather sees a reference to Q al-Mujādalah 58:7: *There is no private conclave of three but He is the fourth of them, nor of five but He is the sixth of them*.

137 Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān*, i, 244–252, a poem of 40 verses (vss. 1–14 translated in Wagner, *Abū Nuwās*, 241).

138 A gloss in the *Dīwān* explains: she is not only living nearby but is also related.

139 Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān*, i, 126–128 (20 vss.), in praise of al-Amīn (vss. 1–5 and 6–9 translated in Wagner, *Abū Nuwās*, 237–238 and 263–264).

140 Ibn al-Athīr (*Mathal*, iii, 101) records the view that despite the excellence of the poem its opening is tactless, because it could be taken as a bad omen when addressing a caliph or ruler.

141 Quoted in Ibn al-Muʿtazz, *Badīʿ*, 20, illustrating *istiʿārah* (metaphor).

Those days on which, whenever I came to a dwelling of your people,
I would come in the dark, cautiously.
But I have lowered and filled my bucket, with errant lovers,
and have let my cattle graze on pleasure's pasture where they did too.
‖ I have attained what a man may attain in his youth, {97}
but of all that the yield is sin. [212]
Braving with me the terror of every wasteland
was a swift she-camel whose advancing was daring,
One that left the camels behind her, as if they were
a file of men, and she their leader, preceding them.
But see! The camels brought me to Muḥammad,
and now their backs are forbidden to men!
They brought me near the best of all who tread on earth,
so we owe to them respect and protection.[142]
The screen was lifted for my eyes and there appeared
a king who is beyond all imaginings,
Like a full moon, enveloped in the light of a caliphhood,
through whose reign Islam is clothed in youthfulness,
Openhanded; even when he sits, legs tucked up,[143]
he tops people's heads while they are standing in rows.
A king who, when he forces matters, is made to proceed by a sharp view
that blunts the sword—it is a cutting sword.
God has cured with him the hearts of grief
and they were healed, no longer sick.
You, son of Zubaydah, Jaʿfar's daughter,[144]
have become our hope with tightly knotted bonds.

142 Abū Nuwās said that with this he wanted to improve on the rather cruel verse by the 1st/7th-century poet al-Shammākh, who tells his she-camel that, as soon as he will have arrived, she may drop dead for all he cares: "When you make me arrive and carry my saddle | to ʿArābah], you may choke in the blood of your heart-artery!" (Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān*, i, 129; al-Marzubānī, *Muwashshaḥ*, 95–96; Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, v, 340). Urban poets such as Abū Nuwās did not usually reach their patrons after arduous desert journeys, and they used the theme as conventional fiction.

143 *Iḥtabā bi-nijādihī* strictly means: "he sat with his legs tucked up to his belly, using his sword-strap to keep them together".

144 Amat al-ʿAzīz bint Jaʿfar (d. 210/831), known as Zubaydah ("Butter Lump" or "Cream Dollop"), was the principal wife of Hārūn al-Rashīd and the granddaughter of caliph al-Manṣūr.

May you live long for the sake of knowledge that gives right guidance
and may the days hang back from your Day.[145]

In the same category is the following poem:[146]

O, who will replace my passion with solace?
Or else, who will make me the concern of a human being,
So that I may be a slave to him, one who gives me
union for union, or forsaking for forsaking?[147]
When we meet for reconciliation after reproach
we shall not separate without a promise of a meeting.
I say, while the reddish camels are travelling with us through the desert,
tugging at the reins, in pairs or alone,
[213] To a strong, thick-necked, robust she-camel,
compactly built like an edifice,
Camel! Do not be weary, for you will reach a king,
kissing whose hand is the same as kissing the Cornerstone![148]
Muḥammad, the best of those who walk on foot
of those created by God, both humans and jinn,
Well-matched between kings, made superior
by two births, both from al-Manṣūr.[149]
God has extended his protective shade over a realm
in which the farthest has become like the nearest.
The two Aḥmads vie in similarity, resembling each other
in physique and character, like two shoelaces of the same cut.[150]

145 i.e., (optimistically) may you outlast Time.

146 Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān*, i, 130–133, also in praise of al-Amīn.

147 The poet was criticised: "You are not a slave if you barter union for union or forsaking for forsaking! That is for an equal of the same status." Abū Nuwās replied, "I intended that a slave's judgement should not oppose his master in what he loves or dislikes, so I put myself in that position towards him" (al-Marzubānī, *Muwashshaḥ*, 413).

148 *Al-rukn*, the cornerstone of the Kaaba that contains the sacred black stone.

149 Al-Manṣūr was Muḥammad al-Amīn's great-grandfather on both his father's and mother's side.

150 "The two Aḥmads" are al-Amīn and the Prophet Muḥammad (who could not have been more different from al-Amīn in character). Al-Mubarrad (quoted in al-Marzubānī, *Muwashshaḥ*, 416) calls it "a brazen statement such as no Muslim would utter". Al-ʿAskarī also condemns it (*Ṣināʿatayn*, 122–123, *Dīwān al-maʿānī*, i, 58). This and the following verse are not included in the version in the *Dīwān* edited by al-Ghazālī (pp. 420–421). Ibn Qutay-

When rain holds back, his gifts never do,
heir to the throne,[151] whose two hands pour out generosity.
He is the one through whom God presents His decree,
so that there should be none second to him in excellence.
He is the one through whom God examines the hearts,
what they secretly utter of unbelief and belief.
People who hoped to overthrow your right
are now subject to God's anger and disobeying Him.[152]
They shall not repel your right unless they also repel
the Qur'an and its verses sent down by God.
God has a sword above their heads, held
in the hand of a man of bright mien, who is neither gullible nor weak.
Death wakes up when he swings it,
for Death will sleep and wake with him.

Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Aʿlā al-Qurashī told me: ʿAbd Allāh ibn Aḥmad[153] informed us that ‖ al-Aṣmaʿī said: ‖ I have never seen nobler people than the Barmakids, both men and children, nor any people with more exalted circumstances. I know that whenever I was in the presence of Yaḥyā, al-Faḍl, or Jaʿfar I always left them with rich presents to me and my friends. Al-Faḍl (al-Aṣmaʿī continued) was glad to confer with me. Once his messenger came to me; it was a cold, frosty day. "The vizier wants to see you", he said, so I went with him. When I entered the vizier was in a reception room furnished with sable fur. He was sitting in a chair of sable, with on his back a cloak of grey sable lined with silk. In front of him stood a silver fireplace, with a golden tripod on top. In the middle stood an image of a crouching lion, with two rubies for eyes, as if burning. On a chinaware platter stood a pitcher of Pharaonic glass[154] and a wine glass like a {98} [214]

bah quotes this and four more verses of the poem (*ʿUyūn*, i, 227) to show that in panegyric poetry extreme statements are sometimes made. In the *Dīwān* this verse is followed by "Two like ones, with no difference to be comprehended: | the meaning is one, though the number is two." In his *Shiʿr* (807) he quotes the two verses saying that the poet "was an unbeliever (*kafara*), or nearly" in them.

151 The poem must have been composed before Hārūn's death in 193/809.

152 The matter of Hārūn's succession was a contentious one; al-Amīn's half-brother ʿAbd Allāh al-Maʾmūn (much more capable but son of a low-status mother) was supported by some, including the Barmakids. In 183/799, when al-Amīn was twelve years old, al-Maʾmūn was appointed as second successor, after al-Amīn.

153 Abū Hiffān. The following is not in the extant part of Abū Hiffān's *Akhbār*, but it is reproduced as an appendix to it (pp. 132–137) by the editor, Farrāj.

154 On *zujāj firʿawnī* see e.g. al-Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥayawān*, iii, 374, Dāwūd al-Anṭākī, *Tadhkirah*, 172 (with details of its manufacture). It is not glass dating from Pharaonic times.

cut gem that could contain a pint.[155] Even a lot of money, I think, could not buy it! He sat on an elevated seat of ivory; I was wearing cotton clothes. I greeted him, he returned the greeting and said to me, "Aṣmaʿī, those are not clothes for a day like this!" "May God let the vizier prosper", I said, "but a man must wear what he finds." Then he said, "Boy, put something of fur on him!" I was given something like what he was wearing and I put it on; it even included socks. Then a table was brought, I don't know what it was made of, but I was at a loss to say what it was made of; and a chinaware[156] bowl shining like the sun with a dish of bird-brain. We ate some of it. Various dishes followed one another. I ate from everything that was served. Really, I swear by Him who chose Muḥammad (God bless him and his kin) with his Message, I didn't know a single dish of them but I have not eaten anything in this world, with caliphs or kings, that came near them in being delicious and tasty. Then the table was taken away and we were served various kinds of perfume. We washed our hands, and every time I used one kind of perfume I thought it was the sweetest of superb scents in the world, until I applied another kind which was even sweeter. When we had finished there was a servant who brought a crystal bowl with *ghāliyah*,[157] glistening with lots of ambergris. We took some with a golden spoon. When I had applied it, I felt like a glowing ember. Then the vizier said, "Pour us a drink!" The servant poured a pint for him and the same for me. As soon as it has gone
[215] past my palate, by God, ‖ I could almost fly from joy and happiness. I felt as if I were in the skin of a twenty-year-old, so elated. The drink crept in me and made me feel queasy[158] from top to toe. It was as if small locusts were hopping inside me. I couldn't help it and said, "God damn Abū Nuwās, when he said,

> When it goes past a man's palate
> his worries call for departure from his breast."

The vizier asked, "Is that verse by him?" and I said, "Yes, my lord." "Is that a single verse?" "No, may God give glory to the vizier," I replied, "There are more verses." "Let us hear them!" said the vizier, so I recited to him:[159]

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155 A *riṭl* or *raṭl* is usually a measure of weight that varied greatly over time and regions; it is often used for liquids such as wine and, though cognate with "litre" (both from Greek λίτρα), it seems best translated as "pint".

156 *Min al-ṣīnī*, in the MS but lacking in the editions.

157 A perfume containing musk and other ingredients such as ambergris.

158 The edition, following the MS, has *fa-khaththarat*; glossed by Farrāj as "left (him) relaxed", but I prefer to read *fa-khattarat*; cf. Lane, *Lexicon*: "*khattarahū* (…) said of wine, or beverage, *It corrupted*, or *disordered, his soul* [or *stomach*]."

159 Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān*, iii, 228–233 (17 vss.); al-Ḥuṣrī, *Zahr*, 980; Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 800–801

There was an orchard watchman's hut on top of a height
(the hands of would-be climbers would almost slip).
[When the sun shone obliquely on it, it provided shade,
when it shone on it face-on, it meant one should enter.][160]
There we put down our luggage, fleeing from the midday heat,
of a dog-day, set ablaze without a wick.
The sun lingered a while, then gave a smidgen
of shade under some scanty ragged reeds.
We sat there, snug as if between the flanks of an ostrich,
its breast raised from where it would crouch for an afternoon nap.
I milked for my companions the udder of youthful folly:
a yellow wine from the juice of the vines, north-wind cooled;
When it goes past a man's palate
his worries call "We're leaving!" from his breast.
When night had completed a portion of darkness
I behaved foolishly, thinking decent what was not decent,[161]
And in the morning I cursed my drunkenness, though drunkenness {99}
had done me good. Ah, many a good deed weighs heavily upon you!
It is sad enough that a generous man is destitute, [216]
finding no favours with misers,
So I shall seek riches either as a caliph's boon companion
on equal terms, or as a terror on the highways,
With any man whose soul does not fly up in fright
when two bands acclaim the name of someone killed,
In order to take God's fifth as tithe from every sinner,
pot-bellied, eating all good things.
Don't you see that money helps being open-handed?[162]
A penniless open-handed man is not like a miser.

The vizier exclaimed, "What a damned good poet he is! Boy, write it down!" Then he said, "I swear to God, were it not for what people say about him, he

(vss. 1, 3, 5, 4), Ibn Abī ʿAwn, *Tashbīhāt*, 340–341 (vss. 1, 3–5); al-Raqīq, *Quṭb al-surūr*, 1061 (vss. 1–2, 5–7, 9 with more vss.). Another English translation of vss. 1–9 in Kennedy, *Wine Song*, 270–271 and see 236–240 on this poem.

160 The verse is taken from the *Mukhtaṣar* (Eghbal, Addenda, 56, not in ed. Farrāj).

161 The next verse in the *Dīwān* (quoted together with the preceding verse in Ibn al-Muʿtazz, *Fuṣūl al-tamāthīl*, 104 and al-Marzubānī, *Muwashshaḥ*, 433; also in al-Raqīq, *Quṭb al-surūr*) is "And I sent down my needs into the loins of a supportive lad, | though he was my closest companion."

162 The *Dīwān* has "being pious" (*tuqā*) instead of "being generous" (*nadā*).

would never part from my side! But when I think about him I find that he is a libertine, a profligate, immoral fellow who frequents the taverns of wine-sellers. So I must renounce his useful qualities on account of his harmful traits." I replied, "May God make the vizier prosper! But despite all that he is rather cultured. I have sat with him in many gatherings of people of all kinds, the literate and the scholars, and whatever topic they debated about, he would be their match and even surpass them. And as for poetry, you know his standing! Didn't he compose the following verses:"[163]

You spoke of departure, one day, and it saddened us.
Had you done so, death would have overcome some of us in the morning.[164]
You maintained that separation would grieve you: yes,
it would grieve you, but not like our grief.
Come on, let us have a fight, to make you realise
which one of us has the saddest heart, the hottest eyes!
Has the short night, Raḥmah, been too long for you?[165]
To us the short night has indeed been long!
Who among people knows about a long night and its worries,
if it is not the astrologer, or me?
Those free of our love-pangs reproach us,
saying, "If he cared not about love he would give it up."
They stand among men relating our doings,
with their silly minds, mocking us.
If my Lord wished, He would afflict them with the like
of what has afflicted us and we would be quits.
I shall complain with al-Faḍl ibn Yaḥyā ibn Khālid about
loving you: perhaps al-Faḍl will unite us,[166]

163 Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān*, i, 167–170 (followed by five more verses); v, 480 (vs. 1 only); al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, viii, 486; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh Dimashq*, xii, 419. For Wagner's German translation see his *Abū Nuwās*, 249 (vss. 1–5), 339 (vs. 11), 343 (vs. 12), 349 (vss. 9–10).

164 This verse is quoted anonymously in Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, v, 505, showing that pronominal suffixes (here *-nā*, "us", twice) may be used as rhyme (although it is generally considered a weakness). The same occurs in vss. 2, 4, 7–9.

165 Raḥmah is identified in Ḥamzah's commentary as Raḥmah ibn Najāḥ (a male servant, see e.g. *Dīwān*, iv, 163, 171, 184); but Abū Nuwās also mentions a woman called Raḥmah in his poetry (see e.g. *Dīwān*, iv, 1, 60). Wagner and Farrāj think that a woman is meant (*hawāki*, "loving you", with the feminine suffix).

166 It is reported that al-Faḍl, on hearing this verse, exclaimed, "He only makes me a pimp!" (*Dīwān*, i, 172; al-Marzubānī, *Muwashshaḥ*, 424; al-Khafājī, *Sirr*, 245), but Ibn Rashīq (*ʿUm-*

An emir whose wealth in his store-rooms [217]
is despised, humble-minded, certain of being wronged.
When other wealthy men are stingy, his generosity summons,
like a muezzin, with "Come to the Emir's money!"
Truly, al-Faḍl is braver than a lion
when he puts on strong armour and acquires honorifics.
To you, Abū l-ʿAbbās, among[167] those who walk,
have we mounted tongue-shaped Ḥaḍramīs,
She-camels that never knew fatigue, never suffered hoof-hurt,
never knew the stallion's assault, never were tarred.[168]

Al-Faḍl said, "I told you that I would not have failed to make him an intimate companion, were it not for his reckless way of life." Then he said, "Boy, take one thousand dinars to him!" I said to the messenger, "Boy, let him know that al-Aṣmaʿī is with the vizier!" Al-Faḍl smiled and said, "Boy, and to Abū Saʿīd's house another thousand dinars!"

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dah, i, 235) exonerates the poet: the following verse makes it clear that it is al-Faḍl's generosity that may enable the poet to marry the woman or acquire her as a concubine (he takes Raḥmah to be female).

167 I follow the *Dīwān*, reading *min bayni* instead of *min dūni*.

168 Camels were tarred against mange. But the "camels" described here are sandals from Hadramaut. See e.g. Ibn Rashīq, *ʿUmdah*, i, 228–229 on poets who overturned the traditional poetic "transition" to the patron by saying they walked rather than travelled on camelback. For references to more "tongue-shaped" footwear see WKAS, *Lām*, 639.

34 Bakr ibn al-Naṭṭāḥ, Whose Teknonym Is Abū Wā'il[1]

Abū Mālik al-Saʿdī told me: Saʿīd ibn al-Muthannā told me: Yazīd ibn Mazyad
{100} said:[2] ‖ "Al-Rashīd, the Commander of the Believers, sent for me on a certain night, at a time at which even an innocent man would have misgivings. I put on some clothes and went, with the messenger telling me to hurry. When I stood before the Caliph, he asked me, 'I say, Yazīd, who composed these verses?' And he recited:

[218] Those of us that are poor live by their swords,
while other people that are poor will beg.
We, and none of all the other tribes, are described
as being intrepid in the Revealed Book.[3]

I replied, 'I swear by Him who honoured you with the caliphate, I don't know.' 'And who composed these verses?' he asked,[4]

Some people's ancestor may be Fihr ibn Mālik,
but it is enough for me that I can boast of Bakr ibn Wā'il.[5]
But they have acquired the inheritance of their forefather,
while our affair came to nothing.

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1 Abū Wā'il Bakr ibn al-Naṭṭāḥ (of the tribe of Ḥanīfah or ʿIjl, see *Aghānī*, xix, 106, both being branches of Bakr ibn Wā'il), a warrior-poet from Basra (thus e.g. Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *Tārīkh*, vii, 567; Sezgin, *GAS*, ii, 628 says he was from al-Yamāmah in central Arabia, the territory of Ḥanīfah, but I cannot find this confirmed elsewhere). He lived in Baghdad for some time, fought in Persia with Abū Dulaf, and died after 222/837. He has entries in *Aghānī*, xix, 105–120; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, vii, 576–577; Ibn Shākir, *Fawāt*, i, 219–221; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, x, 218–221; and see *GAS*, ii, 628–629, ix, 305; *EI2 Suppl.*, 122 (Ch. Pellat); *EAL*, 129 (P.F. Kennedy). His poetry has been collected and edited by Ḥātim Ṣāliḥ al-Ḍāmin (Bakr ibn al-Naṭṭāḥ, *Shiʿr*) and by Muḥammad Nabīl Ṭarīfī (*Dīwān al-luṣūṣ*, i, 81–137).

2 Abū Khālid Yazīd ibn Mazyad ibn Zā'idah al-Shaybānī (d. 185/801), a nephew of Maʿn ibn Zā'idah and the father of Khālid ibn Yazīd (see above, p. 189) was a general and governor. For the following, see *Aghānī*, xix, 107.

3 Bakr ibn al-Naṭṭāḥ, *Shiʿr*, 32, Ṭarīfī, *Dīwān al-luṣūṣ*, i, 127. The second verse is not in the version of *Aghānī*. Both verses with a third are in al-Ḥuṣrī, *Zahr*, 1037 and Ibn Rashīq, *ʿUmdah*, ii, 145, where it is said that with vs. 2 the poet alludes to Q al-Fatḥ 48:16: *Say to the Bedouin Arabs who were left behind: You will be summoned to people of intrepidness*, and that this was taken to refer to the Banū Ḥanīfah at the Riddah ("Secession") wars during Abū Bakr's reign (there are other interpretations, see al-Ṭabarī's *Tafsīr* on this Qur'anic verse.).

4 Bakr ibn al-Naṭṭāḥ, *Shiʿr*, 33, Ṭarīfī, *Dīwān al-luṣūṣ*, i, 128. The second verse is not in the version of *Aghānī*.

5 Fihr ibn Mālik is considered the ancestor of Quraysh (and thus of the Prophet and all caliphs).

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I replied, 'With respect, Commander of the believers, I don't know.' The Caliph said, 'O yes you do! Do you really think, Yazīd, that I let you tread on my bed[6] and carpet and authorise you to command in my name, without my knowing your innermost thoughts and hidden feelings? I swear to God, my spies are on you even in your bed, so do not think you have any authority over yourself! This poet is one of those churls of Rabīʿah[7] that you have given refuge at your place and have admitted to your audience chamber. Now, he said what he said, so bring him to me, that I may get to know him and that he may know that Rabīʿah is not like Quraysh!' Then I left (Yazīd continued). I summoned Bakr ibn al-Naṭṭāḥ and told him what had happened. I gave orders that he be paid two thousand dirhams. He had been on the army payroll; I had him removed from it. I said to him, 'Go to al-Jazīrah!' He went there and remained in hiding until Hārūn died. Then I made him return and I increased his pay and enlarged his lodgings."

He[8] also said: I was told that Bakr, who had come to Abū Dulaf having composed a panegyric poem on him, was summoned by him. "Recite it to me", said Abū Dulaf, so he recited it. When he had reached the passage in which he asked for a remuneration, the general said, "How does this match your verse 'Those of us that are poor live by their swords, while other people that are poor will beg'?" Taken aback, Bakr thought for a second; then he said, "Emir, if I could sit on a horse of your cavalry, hold a lance of your lances in my hand, and gird myself with a sword of your swords, I would not be standing here like this." Then the Emir gave orders for him to be given all that he had mentioned, with a purse containing five hundred dinars. "Now go," said he, "and make your words true with your deeds!"[9] ‖ Bakr left and went his way [219]
towards Hamadhān, intending to go to al-Jazīrah. When he was at a distance of three days' travelling from al-Karaj[10] he met people carrying a lot of money for Abū Dulaf, from some of his territories. Bakr had with him some horsemen of his and he attacked them, killing some and routing those that remained. He took possession of the money and travelled on with it. When Abū Dulaf heard

6 The word *firāshī* is not in *Aghānī* and Eghbal suggests omitting it (but *firāsh*, usually "bed" could also refer here to anything spread on the floor).

7 Ḥanīfah is a branch of Bakr ibn Wāʾil, which belongs to Rabīʿah ibn Nizār, whereas Quraysh belongs to Muḍar ibn Nizār (both are ancestors of the Northern Arabs).

8 Presumably either Abū Malik al-Saʿdī or Saʿīd ibn al-Muthannā. For a version of the following see *Aghānī*, xix, 106–107; Ibn Shākir, *Fawāt*, i, 219; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, x, 218–219.

9 It is told (*Aghānī*, xix, 108–109) that al-Maʾmūn admired the verse by Bakr, adding "But he belied his own words, for why does he beg from Abū Dulaf and get his food from him? Why does he not eat his bread using his sword, as he said?"

10 On al-Karaj and its connection with Abū Dulaf see above, pp. 250–257.

what had happened he laughed. "We have only ourselves to blame!" he said, "For we have incited him to do this."[11]

[In a fine poem by Bakr he says:[12]

If he held in his hand only his soul
he would freely give it. Let him who asks him fear God!
There is no glorious virtue sent among living beings
that is not his glory and his virtue.]

Choice verses by him are these verses on Abū Dulaf:[13]

Your hand is a bow, generosity its string,
your arrow is affluence. Now shoot with it at my penury!

and:[14]

We have sought in many lands but found
no one but you who is kin to noble deeds.
[So bear patiently with our custom, to which you have accustomed us,
or if not, then guide us to whom we should go!]

Singular and original are these verses on Abū Dulaf:[15]

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11 The version of *Aghānī* relates that Abū Dulaf wrote to Bakr promising him a pardon, allowing him to keep the money, and asking him to return to him, which Bakr did, composing panegyrics on him until his death.

12 This bracketed passage is taken from the *Mukhtaṣar* (ed. Farrāj, Appendix, 435). The verses are in Bakr ibn al-Naṭṭāḥ, *Shiʿr*, 34. Vs. 1 is attributed to Ziyād al-Aʿjam or Bakr ibn al-Naṭṭāḥ in Abū Tammām, *Waḥshiyyāt*, 247, to Ziyād al-Aʿjam in Ibn Dāwūd, *Zahrah*, 607; to ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Zabīr al-Asadī in *Aghānī*, 224 (see 225 for a variant of vs. 2); and to Abū Tammām in ps.-al-Jāḥiẓ, *Maḥāsin*, 83 and al-Jurjānī, *Wasāṭah*, 216. It has also been ascribed to Zuhayr ibn Abī Sulmā (Ahlwardt, *The Divans*, 192).

13 Bakr ibn al-Naṭṭāḥ, *Shiʿr*, 22, Ṭarīfī, *Dīwān al-luṣūṣ*, i, 113; attributed to "al-Hindī" on al-Faḍl ibn Yaḥyā in al-Thaʿālibī, *Tawfīq*, 75 (the editor thinks, implausibly, that Abū l-Hindī is meant); and to "al-Bāhilī" (presumably ʿAmr ibn Aḥmar al-Bāhilī) in al-Thaʿālibī, *Lubāb*, 154.

14 Bakr ibn al-Naṭṭāḥ, *Shiʿr*, 6, Ṭarīfī, *Dīwān al-luṣūṣ*, i, 85. The second verse is taken from the *Mukhtaṣar* (ed. Farrāj, Appendix, 435). The verses are found anonymously, addressed to Yazīd ibn al-Muhallab or ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Marwān, in several sources, see e.g. Ibn Qutaybah, *ʿUyūn*, iii, 157; Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, i, 305; al-Qālī, *Amālī*, ii, 283; al-ʿAskarī, *Dīwān al-maʿānī*, i, 49; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, vi, 283; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xxviii, 444.

15 Bakr ibn al-Naṭṭāḥ, *Shiʿr*, 27, Ṭarīfī, *Dīwān al-luṣūṣ*, i, 119; not found elsewhere. As Farrāj notes, the first verse is corrupt and unclear and I follow his tentative emendation.

Your generosity (*nadāka*) called (*nādā*) for them to come when ordered;
Those who are summoned will gain; every listener heeded it:
"Visit the Emir and God's Holy House and you will benefit!"
And all those among us who benefitted chose your face.

He meant God Almighty's words,[16] *And proclaim the Hajj to the people, and they will come to you on foot*. Admired is also the following verse by him:[17]

One is not a true man by one's beauty or perfection: {101}
he who is generous with his wealth is the true man.

Admired, too, are these verses:[18]

A man whose neighbour does not mind his slips
and whose judgement in misfortunes is not strange,
Wise when ignorance makes the ignorant too dazed
to be wise; his courtyard thronged;[19] noble.

These are also choice verses by him:[20] [220]

I give you my sincere advice and my affection,
before meeting, as witnesses of our spirits.
Hearts have for other hearts tokens
of affection before seeing each other in person.

Another choice verse by him:[21]

If Fate stood in awe of anyone apart from you,
after you or before you, it would be awed by you.

16 Q al-Ḥajj 22:27.

17 Bakr ibn al-Naṭṭāḥ, *Shiʿr*, 5, Ṭarīfī, *Dīwān al-luṣūṣ*, i, 83; al-Thaʿālibī, *Lubāb*, 155.

18 Bakr ibn al-Naṭṭāḥ, *Shiʿr*, 6; vs. 1 anonymously, with two more verses, in al-Tawḥīdī, *Baṣāʾir*, iii, 50.

19 *Maghshiyyun finā'uhū*: cf. al-Mubarrad, *Taʿāzī*, 283; Ibn al-Rūmī, *Dīwān*, (i,) 253; al-Buḥturī, *Dīwān*, (ii,) 1271.

20 Bakr ibn al-Naṭṭāḥ, *Shiʿr*, 15; al-Thaʿālibī, *Lubāb*, 155; vs. 1 in al-Tawḥīdī, *Ṣadāqah*, 349 and al-Rāghib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ii, 17.

21 Bakr ibn al-Naṭṭāḥ, *Shiʿr*, 19; the verse is found in an elegy on Maʿn ibn Zāʾidah by Marwān ibn Abī Ḥafṣah quoted in Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, iii, 296 (but not found in Ḥusayn ʿAṭwān's edition of Marwān ibn Abī Ḥafṣah's poetry). Quoted anonymously in Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān* (QDR), where *al-miqdār* is said to mean "death" here; I have rendered it as "Fate", synonym of *al-qadar*.

One of his exquisite major poems is the following:[22]

It was a night of gathering during which I did not forget you,
when the people poured forth from ʿArafāt.[23]
The white-faced women at al-Khayf in Minā did not make me forget you,
when they had gone in droves to the Pebbles.[24]
They circumambulated the Ancient House in the nights[25]
and visited the open space[26] around the House and the courtyards.
It was as if they were statues, clothed (?)[27] in girls' garments,
that appeared to us in silk robes.
Darkness was absent as long as they were not absent; it hid
all the time when they were hiding from it.
They combined beauty and surpassing perfection
and cast[28] their power on onlookers' glances,
And they[29] conferred to me yearning toward you and sorrow
because of you, adding to the sorrows I had.
You took away your beauty, its brocade and embroidery,
and now they show themselves with what you left behind.[30]

22 Bakr ibn al-Naṭṭāḥ, *Shiʿr*, 9–12; al-Shayzarī, *Jamharah*, 425–428; Ṭarīfī, *Dīwān al-luṣūṣ*, i, 89–98. The poem, the longest in the book, offers relatively many textual problems. The amatory opening is set in the context of the Hajj and its rituals, a common theme already in Umayyad poetry. It is followed by tribal vaunting and praise of Abū Dulaf.

23 cf. Q al-Baqarah 2:198 (on the Hajj): *when you pour forth from ʿArafāt*.

24 Al-Khayf is a location at Minā, near Mecca, on the way to ʿArafāt (or ʿArafah). At Minā the rite of casting pebbles (*al-jamarāt*) takes place during the Hajj. ʿArafāt is a plain east of Mecca where pilgrims perform the rite of "standing" (*al-wuqūf*) and where they pitch their tents.

25 The Kaaba is called "the Ancient House" in Q al-Ḥajj 22:29, 33.

26 Following Farrāj's emendation, reading *finā'*, also in *Jamharah*; the MS has *q.bā'*, apparently referring to *Qubā'*, which is the place of the Prophet's Mosque in Medina. But if *al-ʿaraṣāt* ("the courtyards") refers to "the two ʿAraṣahs" in Medina, reading Qubā' could be correct.

27 The MS *has ushribna/ashrabna*; Eghbal suggests reading *usrīna/asrayna*. Neither reading seems without problems, nor do I understand the form *dirʿā* in the following *dirʿā awānisin*. *Jamharah* seems to have *usrīna rawja awānisin*.

28 Reading, with Farrāj, *wa-saddadna* instead of *sdn* as in the MS.

29 Reading *fa-zawwadnanī* instead of *fa-zawwadanī* (MS and Farrāj).

30 Farrāj, following Eghbal's suggestion, reads *muḥtafiyātī* ("walking barefoot"); I prefer to read *mukhtafiyātī* as in the MS (*ikhtāfā* means not only "to hide oneself" but also "to make apparent"); alternatively, one could read, with *Jamharah*, *muktafiyātī* ("being content").

My nights in the Hijaz are long, though
when my nights were short I felt safe from mornings.
Ah, how lovely is Iraq, its land and its river,
and the fruits harvested there!
It is sad enough that the earth between it and me [221]
bears all those mountain tops and wastelands.
Abū Maryam, have an hour's midday rest in ʿUsfān[31]
and go forth in God's name and with blessings!
And pass along the grave of the Prophet, conveying
many greetings and blessings on him!
Hasten your mounts towards Najd,[32]
and be not heedless, for loss[33] lies in heedlessness.
When we are flooded with persisting adversities
then in plunging into them lies escape[34] from adversities.
ʿAbd Allāh behaves ignorantly. Knowledge is suspicion[35]
to someone who knows an ignorant man.
Am I not that profligate, headstrong man, who
always returns to youthful folly, time and again!
I always have a familiar, intimate friend and companion
apart from brothers and those I trust,
Solidarity confiding what is in his heart,
heatedly passing his throat,[36]
Drinking companion of kings who bear up with my dalliance,[37]
yearning for young men and young women.
When will Bakr take me again into their home,
so that I can spend the night, confident of generosity and support?

---

31 ʿUsfān is a place in the Hijaz, between Mecca and Medina. The identity of Abū Maryam is unknown; the following imperatives are plural, apparently addressing him and other travelling companions.

32 Instead of *majd*, "glory" as in the MS, I follow Farrāj's suggestion, confirmed by *Jamharah*. Najd lies between the Hijaz and Iraq.

33 Reading *fa-l-khusru* following Eghbal's suggestion instead of *fa-l-ḥabsu*.

34 Reading, with Eghbal and Farrāj, *al-manjā* (also in *Jamharah*) instead of *al-hayjā*.

35 Tentatively reading *ẓinnatun* instead of *ẓannuhū* as in the editions. The identity of ʿAbd Allāh is unknown.

36 Tentative interpretation of *yamurru lahā ḥarrun ʿalā l-lahawātī* (I do not believe *lahawāt*, literally "uvulas", means "presents" here, as Farrāj says; see WKAS, *Lām*, 1596b, where this verse is quoted together with many other instances of *lahawāt* in similar contexts).

37 Adopting Farrāj's tacit emendation of *tadhallulī* "(my self-abasement") to *tadallulī* (also in *Jamharah*).

{102} And in Asad and in Nimr, sons of Qāsiṭ,[38]
is safety from the vicissitudes of Time.
And men of audacity, fortitude, and acumen
of our brothers are Dhuhl[39] in times of distress.
And if Qays and Taghlib[40] take me up
I will spend the night confident of wealth and riches.
There is many a good place to stay among Ḍubayʿah,[41]
assigned to nobles and chiefs.
[222] In Aklub[42] there is might, both inherited and newly acquired,
far removed from shortcoming and destruction.
Reckless persistence is found only in Rabīʿah,
and riches, and defence of reputation and of what is inviolable.
The reins of the Jāhiliyyah were held by men from among them
with noble sons, men who came first in horse races.[43]
They led armies, first and yet again,
of which ʿĀd attested to the age of their equipment.[44]
The keys that open the doors of generosity are in our hands;
those asking from us call upon us with their desires.

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38 In tribal genealogy al-Qāsiṭ is the father of al-Nimr (or al-Namir) and the grandfather of Bakr ibn Wāʾil (to which the brother tribes of Ḥanīfah and ʿIjl belong, the tribes of the poet and Abū Dulaf, respectively). There are several tribes called Asad, such as the famous tribe of Asad ibn Khuzaymah, as mentioned in Ṭarīfī's note; but the context rather points to Asad ibn Rabīʿah, a forefather of al-Qāsiṭ. For a full genealogy of Abū Dulaf, back to ʿAdnān, see Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, iv, 73, and see Ibn al-Kalbī/Caskel, *Ǧamharat annasab*, Tab. 158.

39 Dhuhl ibn Shaybān is a branch of Bakr ibn Wāʾil.

40 Qays is identified by Ṭarīfi as Qays ʿAylān, a major branch of the Northern Arabs, but it could well be Qays ibn Thaʿlabah since it belongs to Bakr ibn Wāʾil; Taghlib is a brother tribe of Bakr ibn Wāʾil.

41 Probably referring to Ḍubayʿah ibn Rabīʿah ibn Nizār, an ancestor of Bakr ibn Wāʾil. Farrāj's text has *maqāmun fī Ḍabīʿati* [*sic*] *Maʿmarin*, as if it were a compound tribal name, otherwise unknown; but I read *maqāmin* (or *muqāmin*) *fī Ḍubayʿata maʿmarin* (or *muʿmirin*).

42 Aklub is a brother tribe of Ḍubayʿah ibn Rabīʿah.

43 The editions all have *fī l-jalabātī* ("in tumultuous occasions"), as in the MS, which is not impossible; but I prefer to read, with *Jamharah*, *fī l-ḥalabātī*, as fitting better with *zimām* ("rein") and *sabbāqūna*, "coming first".

44 The editions of al-Ṭabbāʿ, Ṭarīfī, and al-Ḍāmin all read *ʿādin*, "an enemy"; but I read it as *ʿĀdun*. ʿĀd is a legendary pre-Islamic Arabian tribe mentioned in the Qur'an. It is often mentioned in connection with times of old, including ancient weapons (cf. Rāshid ibn Shihāb, in *Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, 309: *li-ʿĀdiyyatin mina l-silāḥi staʿartuhā*, tr. Lyall, 247: "I borrow from stores of weapons going back to ʿĀd"). Farrāj reads *bi-kuthri* instead of *nakīra* as in the MS and Eghbal suggests *bi-kusri*. In view of the connotation of ʿĀd with old age, I prefer reading *bi-kabri* (verbal noun of *kabara*, "to exceed in age").

When a man of Bakr dies, his legacy
is a spearhead and a sword with sharp edges.
They did not leave of Chosroes' wealth and armies
anything on earth, after long holding out.[45]
When God's Decree does not give us power over the enemies,
they will be smitten, out of fear for us, with sudden death.
If that tribe, Bakr ibn Wāʾil, threatens with death,
this will cast into the spirit the throes of death.
Those who do not have Bakr on their side are lost
when fearful fighting makes men as if having shy women's legs.
When the Battle Days count Bakr ibn Wāʾil
you will see that Maʿadd ranks well below them.[46]
Every slain man of Rabīʿah traces his origin
to a noble descent of tough, proud men.
When first they settled in al-Yamāmah, and took possession
of castles and rivers midst vegetation,[47]
With a group of them turning to al-Baḥrayn,[48]
they guarded them with their road marks and cattle markings.
They zealously defended the region between Ḥulwān
and al-Darb, al-Darb of the Byzantines with its heights.[49]
As for the sons of ʿĪsā,[50] their territories are Media[51]
as far as the villages contained in Jaww;[52]

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45 Instead of *bayātī* ("doing something at night"), I read, with *Jamharah*, *thabātī*.

46 *Al-ayyām* here stands for *Ayyām al-ʿArab*, the famous pre- and early Islamic battle days of the tribes. Maʿadd (also mentioned in v.s 61) normally stands for Maʿadd ibn ʿAdnān, forefather of all Northern Arab tribes, including Bakr ibn Wāʾil. Perhaps the poet means "all other tribes of Maʿadd".

47 Rivers (*anhār*) in al-Yamāmah is probably a poetic licence.

48 Al-Baḥrayn is not merely the present-day island kingdom of Bahrain but a larger area including a part of mainland Arabia, to the east of al-Yamāmah.

49 Ḥulwān lay near a pass in the Zagros Mountains in western Iran, N.-E. of Baghdad. Al-Darb, "the Road", is here the area between Ṭarasūs (Tarsus, near the Mediterranean in what is now southern Turkey) and the lands of the Byzantines.

50 The father of Abū Dulaf, ʿĪsā ibn Idrīs, "laid the basis for the Dulafid fortune by engaging in highway robbery to such an extent that he was able to retire and erect a stronghold at al-Karadj" (E. Marin in *EI2*, ii, 623, entry "Dulafids").

51 Māh is ancient Media. It may be that instead of *fa-Māhu diyārihim* one should read *fa-Māhu Dināriham*, referring to Māh Dīnār (here with Dīnār for the sake of the metre), which is another name for Nihāwand (see Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-buldān* s.v. Māh Dīnār). Nihāwand is mentioned below in vs. 54.

52 Following Farrāj's emendation of *jinn* to Jaww, which is the old name for al-Yamāmah (see e.g. al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, ii, 272).

Sons of a noble free woman who produced lions,
ferocious in battle and liberally giving purses.
[223] On hallowed bones in al-Zānijān and Dāyah,
under the earth, crumbling,[53]
Stop, you two, and ask them if they will answer, and try
Abū Dulaf, man of importance and benefactions,[54]
45 A man who, ever since he took up[55] the sword and the lance, removes
his enemies from this world, without raiding at night.[56]
He is the excellent, victorious one, the banner
that passed around, for his enemies, the cup of death.
He made Jīlūyah taste perdition among the cavalry of Fārs,
and being vanquished;[57] and they became crumbling bones.[58]
The knights of Qaḥṭān never took their turn against anyone,
before him, whether secretly or openly.
His horses coursed forward with red chests, while their horses
had their croupes and thighs dyed red.
50 On ʿAsqalān he fell in the morning with an army
that made the Byzantines cry copious tears.[59]

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53 The bones apparently refer to those of Abū Dulaf's brother Maʿqil ibn Idrīs, killed by the Kurdish chieftain Jīlūyah (see above, p. 256). Instead of al-Rāyiḥān, as in the text, I suggest reading al-Zānijān or al-Zāmijān. In his account of the events al-Iṣṭakhrī (*Masālik*, 144) mentions Ramm al-Zamījān, which appears as Ramm al-Zanījān in Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-buldān*. The poet may have adapted the place name to the metre. Dāyah has not been identified. *Jamharah* seems to have Fāʾiq, which is also obscure.

54 The "two companions convention", usually found at the beginning of a poem (where often the abandoned traces are asked to respond rather than the bones of a slain man), is here found at the transition to the panegyric. I follow Farrāj's suggestion of reading *dhī l-shaʾni wa-l-ḥasanātī* instead of *fī shaʾnihā l-ḥasanātī* as in the text, which is unclear.

55 Rather than adopting Farrāj's reading *mā aqalla* instead of *man aqalla*, I read *mudh aqalla*, with *Jamharah*. Ṭarīfī emends it to *in afalla*, which seems less likely ("to blunt" is *falla*, not *afalla*). For a French translation of vss. 45–56 see Audebert, "Emprunts faits au Coran", 462–463.

56 Interpretation of *bi-ghayri bayātī* uncertain (Audebert: "sans attendre la *nuit*", the italics referring to the allusion to *bayāt* in the Qurʾan, al-Aʿrāf, 7:4, 97).

57 Farrāj suggests reading Buṣrā (adopted by Ṭarīfī), a village near Baghdad or Bostra in Syria, instead of *naṣran*. For Jīlūyah (here spelled *Jlwyh* as if read Jilwayhi) see above, p. 256.

58 *Aʿẓuman nakhirātī*, cf. Q al-Nāziʿāt 79:11 (*ʿiẓāman nakhirah*).

59 *Wa-ṣabbaḥa ṣubḥan* seems to echo Q al-Qamar 54:38 (*ṣabbaḥahum bukratan*). I have not been able to find anything about Abū Dulaf's exploits against ʿAsqalān (Ascalon) and other places in Syria, if my tentative identifications in the next note are correct. He was governor of Damascus under al-Muʿtaṣim.

Untiringly he went from ʿUqayl, not distracted (?),
and he did not go past Hermon (?) and then al-Salawāt. (?)[60]
He fell upon them in the night with fire,[61] so that they dispersed
towards the fortress with their dead, a bad nightly raid!
He roamed the borders of the land, determined {103}
to raid the inhabitants with his cavalry.
He drove the Kurds from the two mountain passes of Nihāwand[62]
after he had satisfied the white swords' craving, resolutely.[63]
He made the white swords drink their fill at the well's water
and quenched, twice over, the lances' thirst with blood.
He was not to be turned away from Shahrazūr by its narrow defile[64]
or from going to the waterhole with bitter water, not sweet.
From Hamadhān a battalion came to fight with him, [224]
but it returned ill-fatedly, disastrously.
And in Ḥarashān[65] he singlehandedly made the men dismount
and prostrate themselves, chins and foreheads to the ground.
No one who tried escaped, one after the other,
having been dealt wide stab wounds, "Take that! Let me have that!"
It is the religion of the Commander of the Faithful and his judgement
that we profess and with which we banish doubt and ambiguities.
Every tribe[66] of Maʿadd and other tribes too
see Qāsim as a light in darknesses.[67]
If death did not exist, its place would be taken
by Abū Dulaf, destroyer of souls.

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60 *Saʿā ghayra wānin ʿan ʿUqaylin* (*ʿAqīlin?* thus Audebert) *wa-mā salā | wa-lam yaʿdu* (not *yaʿud* as in Ṭarīfī's edition) *ʿan Ḥ.rmāna* (not the unmetrical Ḥaramān as in Audebert's translation) *fa-l-Salawātī*. The verse is incomprehensible and the text is likely to be corrupt. ʿUqayl is a place in the Hawran and Ḥ.rmān could be Mt Hermon, even though it is, to my knowledge, always called Jabal al-Shaykh in Arabic. Al-Salawāt has not been identifed.

61 Eghbal's emendation of *fa-nattabahum* (or *fa-nabbatahum*) to *fa-bayyatahum* is surely correct and corroborated by the rhyme word *bayātī*. Compare Q al-Naml 27:49: *la-nubayyitannahū* (*We shall surely attack then by night*).

62 Nihāwand is a town in the Zagros Mountains, two day-marches from al-Karaj.

63 The text of the MS and the edition reads as *saqā furaḍa l-qurbāni bi-l-raqafātī*, which is unclear to me; I have read, with *Jamharah*, *shafā qaraman li-l-bīḍi bi-l-ʿazamātī*.

64 I adopt Farrāj's suggestion of reading *maḍīquhā* (confirmed by *Jamharah*) instead of *maṣīfuhā*. Shahrazūr is a Kurdish region between Irbil and Hamadhān.

65 Unidentified. Ṭarīfī, reading *wa-bi-l-ḥurashāni*, says that it refers to two mountains (which would have given *bi-l-Ḥurashayni* here), but Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-buldān* vowels this as Ḥurshān(i), metrically impossible here.

66 Reading, with Farrāj, *qabīlin* instead of *qatīlin*.

67 Qāsim is Abū Dulaf.

Abū Dulaf! You have given battle twenty times
and annihilated people on earth over the years.
You, with the sword caused the path of death to be thronged,
traversed by the slain who did not die a natural death.
You patiently suffered (patience is a natural trait of yours)
the perfidies of perfidious Fate,
Until you raised sword and lance, having risen,
and you reached the Pleiades[68] in the heavens.
You responded to Hārūn, the Caliph, when he called,
and you found him to be most obliging in God's way.
You gave security to a fearful herd and drove it back,[69]
and you reunited ʿIjl, long dispersed.
You put back the bark on to the stick and brought them together,
after they had made the testing of the stick … (?)[70]
You have enveloped the poor and others in your good will
and you let charity follow, attached with gifts.
Your glory is joined with knowledge and dominion,
your generosity is joined with truthful promises.
The tribes have never failed to have in you
a magnanimous man who outstrips the wind, a true friend of
gifts (?)[71]
You do not have a peer in this world when people run
a long distance, the finish remote.
Whenever a favour from you gave us protective shade
you made similar blessings its sisters.
You have spread riches, rash killing,[72] bounty, and generosity,
with strong intrepidity and sound deliberation.

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68 Reading, with Farrāj, *fa-nilta* instead of *qatalta*. *Al-najm*, "the star, or asterism", often refers to the Pleiades, also called *al-Thurayyā*.

69 Ṭarīfī thinks that *sirb* refers to women here, because a group of women may be compared to a *sirb*, but I do not think that this applies here.

70 The text is unclear: *wa-qad ṣayyarū ʿajma l-ʿaṣā ʿabarātī* (the MS would allow reading *ʿasirātī*). *ʿAbarāt* ("tears") does not seem correct. *Jamharah* has *wa-qad ṣayyarū ghimḍa l-ʿaṣā ʿusharātī*.

71 Again an unclear passage; the MS reads as *y.b.ddu l-rīḥa khalfa hanātī*, which Farrāj, following Eghbal's suggestion, emends to *yabudhdhu l-rumḥa ḥilfa hibātī*, adopted here. *Jamharah* has *hibātun tabudhdhu* (*?*) *l-rīḥa ayya hibātī*.

72 Amidst the three beneficial nouns, *fatk* ("acting recklessly", or "murdering") stands out strangely. The list would be more balanced (like the second hemistich) if *wa-l-nadā* is read e.g. as *wa-l-radā*, "and destruction".

Praise of Abū Dulaf has exhausted my descriptions, [225]
though only some of my descriptions are enough for other people.
Through him a realm that was near destruction was restored
and the most excellent favours were amply bestowed on ʿĪsā's kin.[73]
Qāsim has built glory as lofty houses
and raised the houses of glory with his resolution.
He resembles ʿĪsā in his generosity and power,
and in his love of bestowing favours and charitable gifts,
And he resembles Idrīs, with whose sword-edge
the fires of war were kindled in the wastelands.[74]
The noble horses of the Maʿqilīs[75] in battle
were like Hell with its fury and heavy breathing.[76]
ʿUmayr, Maʿqil's father, led the descendants of Wāʾil
to glory; he was the remover of troubles.
The Banū Dulaf[77] are more worthy of excellence because they are
sources of what is precious, with certain knowledge of what is to
come.
It is as if their hands are filled with clouds {104}
when they cover the skies with lasting rain showers.

All poets acknowledge that this verse is unsurpassed in beauty and its excellent import; although the poem as a whole is of a mode superior to brocade.

When I visit them, every year, they show delight
and do not neglect to give boons and presents.
So often they have made me prosper, given me splendid awards,
spent freely to me for my expenditures!
With all their gifts that my hands hold I feel
like Maʿn, the like of Ṭalḥat al-Ṭalaḥāt![78]

73 ʿĪsā ibn Idrīs ibn Maʿqil, Abū Dulaf's father.

74 Following Farrāj in reading *fī l-falawātī* for *fī l-fatayātī*.

75 The descendants of Maʿqil ibn ʿUmayr, Abū Dulaf's great-grandfather.

76 *Dhātu l-ghayẓi wa-l-zafarātī*, echoing Q al-Furqān 25:12, describing the blaze of Hell: *samiʿū lahā taghayyuẓan wa-ẓafīrā* (*They will hear its fury and breathing*).

77 Dulaf ibn Jusham ibn Qays ibn Saʿd ibn ʿIjl is an ancestor of Abū Dulaf.

78 He feels as rich and, one hopes, as generous, as the famous Maʿn ibn Zāʾidah and Ṭalḥah ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Khalaf al-Khuzāʿī (d. c. 65/684–685), known as "the Ṭalḥah of Ṭalḥahs", named among the "generous men (*ajwād*) in Islamic times" (see e.g. Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, i, 294; Maʿn is also lauded among the *ajwād*, i, 302).

It is my people's wish that I be made immortal among them;
my enemies' wish is the expiring of my life.
I am the poet who dictates to a thousand scribes;
my dictation goes faster than the swift-flowing Euphrates.
I produce, and do not merely transmit to people, a poem;
I am deemed a devil for the quality of my transmitters![79]

79 Proudly comparing oneself to Iblīs (Satan's name, also "devil" as a generic noun) is unusual.

35 al-Raqāshī[1] [226]

His name is al-Faḍl ibn ʿAbd al-Ṣamad al-Raqāshī, a *mawlā* [of Rabīʿah].[2] [Ibrāhīm ibn Tamīm told me: al-Muʿallā ibn Ḥumayd told me: al-Raqāshī was a Persian, from the people of al-Rayy. Fine poetry by al-Raqāshī is his poem on Mūsā ibn Yaḥyā ibn Khālid:[3]

The sons of Barmak say—and they spoke truly—:
The hero of generosity[4] is their Mūsā;
Their Khālid in war when it flares up,
and in piety and modesty their Yaḥyā.

Admired, too, is also what he said, also on Mūsā ibn Yaḥyā ibn Khālid; it is a long poem that is widely known, so we restrict ourselves to quoting merely these two verses:[5]

Hind wrote to me, "Why are you staying away from us?
You've been away from us for a whole year!"
I replied, "I am unable to leave a town
in which the noble Mūsā ibn Yaḥyā dwells."]

Abū Mālik told me:[6] Al-Faḍl ibn al-Rabīʿ said to al-Faḍl ibn ʿAbd al-Ṣamad al-Raqāshī, "Damn you, Raqāshī! You intended to oppose the pious with your

1 Abū l-ʿAbbās al-Faḍl ibn ʿAbd al-Ṣamad al-Raqāshī, poet from Basra, a *mawlā* of Persian descent. He was connected especially with the Barmakids. He has entries in *Aghānī*, xvi, 244–250; al-Marzubānī, *Muʿjam*, 180–181; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, xiv, 305–306; Ibn Shākīr, *Fawāt*, iii, 183–185; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xxiv, 53–54. See GAS, ii, 516, EAL, 647 (P.F. Kennedy). He is said to have died "in the 200s" (between 815 and 825, see *Fawāt* and *Wāfī*).

2 The addition is by Farrāj, taken from *Aghānī* or *Muwashshaḥ*. Raqāsh (a female name of the *faʿāli* pattern) is probably Raqāsh bint Ḍubayʿah, after whom a collection of related tribes is named (Ibn al-Kalbī/Caskel, *Ǧamharat an-nasab*, ii, 485). The following bracketed passage is taken from the *Mukhtaṣar* (ed. Farrāj, Appendix, 435–436).

3 Mūsā ibn Yaḥyā ibn Khālid (d. 221/835) was the brother of the more famous Barmakids Jaʿfar and al-Faḍl; after their fall he came into favour again under al-Amīn and al-Maʾmūn. On him see e.g. al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xxvi, 569–570. The verses are not found elsewhere.

4 The MS and the editions have *qarīʿ al-samā'*, which does not make sense, and I have read *qarīʿ al-samāḥ*, as in a verse by al-Kumayt (al-Jurjānī, *Wasāṭah*, 286, al-Ḥuṣrī, *Zahr*, 995). Al-Raqāshī's epigram lists the three chief virtues of the Barmakids.

5 Not found elsewhere.

6 See Ibn Shākir, *Fawāt*, iii, 183 and al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xxiv, 53 (both quote Ibn al-Muʿtazz as their source); and see *Aghānī*, xvi, 246. Al-Faḍl ibn al-Rabīʿ (d. 207/822 or the year after) was vizier under al-Rashīd and al-Amīn.

counsel!"[7] Al-Raqāshī replied, "Dear Sir! If I knew that I would be cured of my illness and stay alive, I would not have given such counsel. But it is one of the precious stores that are saved for death." This counsel of his is a poem in *rajaz* metre with paired rhyme, in which he enjoins people to commit sodomy, drink wine, gamble, engage in cockfighting and dogfighting,[8] asserting (as you see) by way of libertinism and licentiousness, that is to be "stored for the time of one's death". The opening couplet is:[9]

> Al-Raqāshī admonishes his dearest friends
> With a counsel that is commended among his brethren.

It is a well-known, widely found poem.

Ibrāhīm ibn Tamīm told me: al-Muʿallā ibn Ḥumayd told me: Al-Raqāshī's family were Persians from al-Rayy. Abū Nuwās lampooned him when he was angry with him about something:[10]

> I found that al-Faḍl is nobler than Raqāsh,
> because al-Faḍl is a *mawlā* of the Messenger!

With this he refers to the saying of the Prophet (God bless and preserve him and his family): "I am the patron of those who have no patron."[11]

[227] Ibn Abī l-Khansāʾ told me: My father told me:[12] ‖ When Abū Dulaf composed his poem in which he said,

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7 A *waṣiyyah* is usually a pious and moralistic counsel or admonition, often uttered as a last will and testament.

8 Animal fighting games are forbidden in Islam, not on account of their cruelty, but because they are forms of gambling (Rosenthal, *Gambling in Islam*, 57–58).

9 Even though Ibn al-Muʿtazz says that the poem was popular (*Aghānī* adds: "among the elite and the common people"), no more of it has been found. In *Aghānī*, xvi, 246 a copy of the poem in al-Jāḥiẓ's handwriting is mentioned, as being by Abū Naʿāmah (on whom see below, § 105). For mock-counsels in verse by Abū Nuwās (with whom al-Raqāshī exchanged many lampoons), see his *Dīwān*, v, 199–216 and van Gelder, "Poetic Parodies".

10 Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān*, ii, 69 (in a piece of 4 vss.), v, 432; Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 813 (with a following verse).

11 *Anā mawlā man lā mawlā lahū* (where *mawlā* does not mean "client" but its correlated opposite, "patron" or "protector"), or variants of this, is found in many Hadith collections.

12 For Abū Dulaf's verse and those by al-Raqāshī see *Aghānī*, xvi, 246–247; Ibn Shākir, *Fawāt*, iii, 184–185; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xxiv, 52 (in these sources al-Raqāshī's poem has 11 or 12 verses).

Hand me, woman, a coat of mail, for too long
have I relaxed from war![13]

Al-Raqāshī responded with:

Keep far from me, woman, a coat of mail, for too long
have I relaxed from revelling!
Break the helmet and the javelin
and begin with the sword,
And throw in the middle of the sea
my bow, my arrows,
And my shield, my lance,
my saddle, and my bridle.
And hock my foal—may God strike
my foal with *ṣidām*![14]
I do not seek to be known
for my worth in war.
It is enough for me that you see me
among noble young men.
We defeat the wine, whenever some {105}
other people are eager to be routed.
We leave striking and stabbing
of bodies and skulls
To a wretch who says, "Too long
have I relaxed from war."

Al-Raqāshī composed a lot of poetry, little of which is good. He was devoted to the Barmakids, on whom he composed panegyric poetry and from whom he earned a living. When their power ended he went to Khorasan, attaching himself to Ṭāhir ibn al-Ḥusayn. He stayed there until he died.

13 Instead of *jamāmī* ("my rest, relaxation"), *Fawāt* and *Wāfī* have *fiṭāmī* ("my being weaned"); the same variant recurs at the end of al-Raqāshī's poem. *Aghānī* adds another verse by Abū Dulaf, saying that he has not shot arrows at people for two months.

14 Unidentified disease that affects a horse's head or stomach.

36 Abū l-ʿAtāhiyah[1]

Abū l-Khaṣīb told me: al-Mazyadī[2] told me: Abū l-ʿAtāhiyah's proper name was Ismāʿīl ibn al-Qāsim and his teknonym was Abū Isḥāq.[3] He was a *mawlā* of
[228] ʿAnazah. ‖ He was accused of heresy, despite his many poems on renunciation and pious admonitions, mentioning death, the resurrection of the dead, hell, and heaven. In my view it is correct to say that he was a dualist.[4] Abū Rajāʾ al-Baṣrī told me: ʿAlī ibn Maʿmar al-Tamīmī told us: an old man, one of the early state secretaries, told me: I used to visit Abū l-ʿAtāhiyah, in order to copy his poems on renunciation and other themes. He had two daughters, one of them was called ByGod and the other ToGod.[5] He had a pious, renunciant son who was also a poet; but he had withdrawn from worldly things.[6] [He had been moved to do so by his father's poetry and all the admonitions and wisdom it contains.]

Abū l-Azhar al-Tabbān told me, on the authority of Abū l-ʿAnqāʾ al-Baṣrī:[7] Abū l-ʿAtāhiyah was one of those naturally talented poets, almost all of whose

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1 Abū l-ʿAtāhiyah Ismāʿīl ibn al-Qāsim ibn Suwayd (d. 211/826), born in or near Kufa, a *mawlā* of the tribe of ʿAnazah, a major poet famous especially for his "renunciant" or ascetic poems (*zuhdiyyāt*), composed intentionally with simple diction for the sake of accessibility. Although many of his poems have a pious ring, he was accused of heresy (*zandaqah*). He has entries in Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 791–795; *Aghānī*, iii, 368, iv, 1–112; Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, i, 503–504; al-Marzubānī, *Muwashshaḥ*, 395–407; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, vii, 226–238; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, i, 219–226; al-Nashshābī, *Mudhākarah*, 104–118 (where he is consistently called Abū ʿAtāhiyah, without the article); al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, ix, 185–190; Ibn Faḍl Allāh, *Masālik* (ed. al-Jubūrī), xiv, 396–404. See *EI2*, i, 107–108, "Abū ʾl-ʿAtāhiya" (A. Guillaume); *EI3*, "Abū l-ʿAtāhiya" (Robyn S. Creswell); *GAS*, ii, 534–535, ix, 297–298; *EAL*, 27–28 (P.F. Kennedy); Cooperson & Toorawa (eds), *Arabic Literary Culture, 500–925*, 12–20, "Abu al-ʿAtahiya" (Everett K. Rowson). His collected poetry has been edited several times; I use the edition by Shukrī Fayṣal. His son, also a poet, has a short entry below, § 89.

2 Farrāj suggests this may be a corruption of al-Yazīdī.

3 This implies that Abū l-ʿAtāhiyah was not a teknonym but a nickname (*laqab*); *ʿatāhiyah* means "derangement, insanity" (see the anecdote in *Aghānī*, iv, 3). Consequently, his son's name, *pace* Ibn al-Muʿtazz in § 89, was not al-ʿAtāhiyah (he is called Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad, see *Aghānī*, iv, 88 and al-Marzubānī, *Muʿjam*, 377). Perhaps the nickname Abū l-ʿAtāhiyah was perversely taken literally, as "father of ʿAtāhiyah", by way of a joke.

4 He is called a *thanawī*, a believer in two opposing supreme powers of good *vs.* evil, referring to Manichaeism and related beliefs. But it seems that the poet had no clear and systematic views on religion.

5 *Bi-llāh* and *Li-llāh*, respectively. According to al-Ābī, *Nathr al-durr*, vii, 199 they were called *Surra-llāh* ("God-is-Pleased") and *Ḥasbuhā-llāh* ("God-Suffices-Her").

6 See *Aghānī*, iv, 88 on these daughters and the son called Muḥammad. The following bracketed sentence is taken from the *Mukhtaṣar* (ed. Farrāj, Appendix, 436).

7 For the following cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 791.

speech is poetry.[8] His love poetry is very smooth[9] and resembles the speech of women, agreeing with their natures. It was the same with ʿUmar ibn Abī Rabīʿah al-Makhzūmī and al-ʿAbbās ibn al-Aḥnaf.[10] Abū l-ʿAtāhiyah composed love poetry on ʿUtbah, the slave girl of Rayṭah, the daughter of Abū l-ʿAbbās al-Saffāḥ,[11] making it appear that he was passionately in love with her, in fine descriptions. Some of the verses on ʿUtbah are the following:[12]

I let ʿUtbah know that I
am on the brink of an abyss for her.
I complained to her about my state,
with tears flowing from my eyes.
Then, bored with my complaints
coming from a most abject complainant,
She asked, "Which people know
what you are saying?" I said, "All."

All erudite, literate people agree that they have never heard a more fittingly placed rhyme than his words ‖ "I said, 'All.'" It is a famous poem,[13] used as lyrics for a song. [229]

Al-Mubarrad told me: Muḥammad ibn al-Baṣrī told me:[14] Because Abū l-ʿAtāhiyah's verse was so easy and admirably natural, he occasionally composed metrical poetry that was not in one of the known metres. He played with poetry, taking it as he pleased.

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8 *Aghānī*, iv, 13: "I heard him (viz., Abū l-ʿAtāhiyah) say, 'If I wanted all my speech to be poetry, I would make it so.'"

9 Instead of *layyin jiddan* Ibn Qutaybah has *ḍaʿīf*, "feeble".

10 ʿUmar ibn Abī Rabīʿah (d. 93/712 or 103/721) was an important Umayyad poet from Mecca (*GAS*, ii, 415–417, *EI2*, x, 822–823, "ʿUmar b. Abī Rabīʿa" [J.E. Montgomery]). Al-ʿAbbās ibn al-Aḥnaf has an entry below, § 42.

11 The text has incorrectly Rāʾiṭah (also below); the common form is Rayṭah, as in e.g. Ibn Ḥabīb, *Muḥabbar*, 60 and Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 792, where ʿUtbah is said to be the concubine of al-Mahdī; cf. al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, iv, 172, where she is called the slave girl of al-Khayzurān, al-Mahdī's wife. Al-Saffāḥ was the first Abbasid caliph.

12 Abū l-ʿAtāhiyah, *Ashʿār*, 598–599 (5 vss.); al-ʿAskarī, *Dīwān al-maʿānī*, i, 125; al-Thaʿālibī, *Iʿjāz*, 161 (quoting Ibn al-Muʿtazz's commentary); Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, i, 219; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, ix, 185.

13 He uses the term *qaṣīdah*, which normally refers to longer poems, but no more verses are known.

14 For the following, compare Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 791–792; al-Marzubānī, *Muwashshaḥ*, 405; *Aghānī*, iv, 13 (when reproached for deviating from standard prosody: *Anā akbar min al-ʿarūḍ*, "I am above metrics", also al-Murtaḍā, *Amālī*, i, 291).

Ibrāhīm ibn al-ʿAbbās al-Kātib[15] told me, on the authority of his father: Abū l-ʿAtāhiyah said, "Al-Maʾmūn asked me, 'Who is the better poet, you or Abū Nuwās?' I replied, 'You know who I am, Commander of the Believers. But I do wish that some verses by Abū Nuwās were mine, for then I would be superior to all poets on earth!' 'What are they?' asked the Caliph. I said, 'They are:[16]

For many a man who enslaves his friends with his wealth
I dressed myself in pride overcoming his pride.
When he and I would be in the same gathering
he would find in me a roughness exceeding his roughness.
{106} And I would grow even more arrogant to others because
I find myself the one of them needing least though being poor.'

Al-Maʾmūn said, 'Well spoken by that man, well spoken!' "[17]

Al-ʿArūḍī[18] al-Kūfī told me: Muḥammad ibn Ziyād, who transmitted much of Abū l-ʿAtāhiyah's poetry, told me: One day Abū l-ʿAtāhiyah was sitting in the company of a fuller. Hearing the beating of the mallet he, with his poetical gift, composed a poem following its rhythm. One of the verses was the following:[19]

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15 He cannot be Ibrāhīm ibn al-ʿAbbās al-Ṣūlī (d. 243/857), poet and *kātib* (state secretary), because he died a few years before Ibn al-Muʿtazz was born.

16 Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān*, i, 385 (in a poem of 7 vss.); Ibn Manẓūr, *Akhbār Abī Nuwās*, i, 92–92; al-Jahshiyārī, *Wuzarāʾ*, 295 (vss. 1, 3); al-Ḥuṣrī, *Jamʿ al-jawāhir*, 166 (where it is said that al-Amīn believed the poem was about him).

17 In the *Mukhtaṣar* al-Maʾmūn says, "No other poet has done justice to that thought better than he!" (ed. Farrāj, Appendix, 436).

18 Thus, instead of the clearly corrupt "al-Maʿrūsī" in the text. Al-ʿArūḍī al-Kūfī, "the Kufan Prosodist", is Abū Muḥammad Buzurj ibn Muḥammad, who wrote treatises on metrics attacking the views of al-Khalīl ibn Aḥmad; see Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, i, 218; al-Marzubānī, *Nūr al-qabas*, 278; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, x, 112–113; al-Qifṭī, *Inbāh*, i, 276–278; Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, vii, 71–75. Instead of Buzurj (probably from Persian *buzurg*) Yāqūt and al-Ṣafadī have the less likely Barzakh.

19 *Al-manūna mufniyātun* | *wāḥidan fa-wāḥidā*, a trochaic verse (LSLSLSLL | LSLSLSL) that does not correspond to a traditional metre. A longer version in Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 791–792 is even more irregular: *Li-l-manūni dāʾirā-* | *tun yudirna ṣarfahā* || *hunna yantaqīnanā* (*sic*, the metre requires *yantaqīnā*) | *wāḥidan fa-wāḥidā* (considered as two isolated verses, or hemistichs, in the *Dīwān*, 522–523 and 580). One notes that *al-manūn*, "Fate(s), death", is treated as a plural noun in the former version and as a singular in the latter. The story of the fuller and his mallet is similar to that of al-Khalīl ibn Aḥmad and his discovery of the system of Arabic prosody, itself reminiscent of the anecdote about Pythagoras and his discovery of musical intervals by hearing smiths striking their anvils (see above, p. 140).

The Fates extinguish
one by one.

It seems he was seeing the fuller taking one cloth after another and made a comparison with death taking one human being after another, taking the metre from the rhythm of the mallet.

The following verses are widely known:[20]

I stretch my hand toward you, begging:
what will you donate to this beggar?
If you do not grant him anything, then say
some kind words to him instead of a gift.
Or if you are in straitened circumstances this year, [230]
bad luck! But let him hope for the future.

This poem, with its graciousness, has on women an effect like that of cool, pure water on someone parched. Abū l-Bilād told me, on the authority of al-Akhwaṣ al-Aṣghar:[21] ʿUtbah, on whom he made love poetry, expressing his passionate love for her, was the slave girl of Rayṭah, the daughter of Abū l-ʿAbbās al-Saffāḥ. Rayṭah was the wife of her paternal cousin al-Mahdī, the son of al-Manṣūr, the Commander of the Believers. When al-Mahdī heard about the many poems in which he mentions and describes her, he was angry and said, "Can't this pot-seller find someone else's women to dally with?"—In the past Abū l-ʿAtāhiyah had been selling pots on the market in Kufa; then he acquired an education and rose with it. Then (al-Akhwaṣ continued) al-Mahdī imprisoned him. Abū l-ʿAtāhiyah made Yazīd ibn Manṣūr, the maternal uncle of al-Mahdī, to whom he was very dear, intercede for him, and the poet was released. However, he returned to what he had been doing with her. When this had lasted for some time, Rayṭah went to al-Mahdī and complained, saying, "He has publicly and scandalously exposed my slave girl with his poetry!" Thus she incensed al-Mahdī against him. He summoned him and had him whipped in his presence in the government offices.[22] Having a weak constitution, the poet fainted. When

20 Abū l-ʿAtāhiyah, *Ashʿār*, 617–618 (a poem of 10 vss.); Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 791; al-Zajjājī, *Akhbār*, 35; Ibn Rashīq, *ʿUmdah*, i, 126; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, 223; al-Baṣrī, *al-Ḥamāsah al-Baṣrīyyah*, ii, 196.

21 Compare Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 792. Abū l-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī promises to include a separate section on Abū l-ʿAtāhiyah and ʿUtbah (*Aghānī*, iv, 1, 112) but it is not found in the extant text. See e.g. al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, iv, 172–178 (partial tr. Lunde & Stone, 43–45).

22 *Fī l-dawāwīn*. Farrāj notes that the MS seems to have *fī l-darārīn* and that perhaps one

he came to, he raised his head and saw ʿUtbah standing on a rooftop, looking at him, and he said,[23]

> Bravo, ʿUtbah, well done from someone like you!
> Al-Mahdī has killed a man because of you!

Al-Mahdī, amazed at this, felt pity for him and gave orders for him to be treated well. He promised him that he would ask the slave girl's mistress for the girl to be given to him as a gift, and that he would hand her to the poet. When the girl learned this, after Abū l-ʿAtāhiyah had pressed al-Mahdī, in a poem, to fulfil his promise, she said, "Commander of the Believers, I beseech you, seeking protection in your honour and dignity, by what is due to me considering my service and companionship, not to remove me from the abode of bliss to a seller of pots,
[231] a vulgar, low-minded fellow! Furthermore, he merely wants fame and renown ‖ and he is not really a lover. If you want to know what he really thinks, then give orders that he be given a hefty sum. That will make him forget me and keep him from mentioning me." Al-Mahdī ordered that he should be given one hundred thousand, without specifying either silver or gold coins.[24] Abū l-ʿAtāhiyah took the written money order to the state secretaries, who gave him one hundred thousand dirhams, because the kind of specie was not mentioned. The poet refused, not being satisfied with that. "I think that the order must be for one hundred thousand dinars", he said. "Surely he would not have given me less, as compensation for her!" They answered, "Then you must wait until we consult
{107} the Caliph about ‖ the order!" For a month he returned repeatedly, demanding the money. ʿUtbah saw him when he had entered the palace to ask again, and she said to him, "You brazen-faced fellow! If you were a passionate lover you would not be concerned with haggling over dirhams or dinars!" When al-Mahdī heard about what she had said he became aware that she knew the man better than he and he withdrew his order.

The following verses Abū l-ʿAtāhiyah sent to al-Rashīd, who had been angry with him and had imprisoned him:[25]

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should read *fī l-dīwān*. Eghbal suggests *fī l-darābazīn* ("on the balustrade, or balcony", from Greek τραπέζιον), referring to Dozy, *Supplément*, s.v.

23 Abū l-ʿAtāhiyah, *Ashʿār*, 629; al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, iv, 174 (with rhyme word *qatīlā* instead of *qatīl*), where also a version of the following is related.

24 i.e., dirhams or dinars, respectively. In al-Masʿūdī's account it is merely a jar (*barnīyyah*) that is to be filled with coins.

25 Abū l-ʿAtāhiyah, *Ashʿār*, 556. This and the following five pieces are in Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 792–793; idem, *ʿUyūn*, i, 82 only has this and the following piece.

May my soul ransom you from all that your soul
dislikes: if I have sinned, forgive me!
Would that my heart could depict for you what it contains,
so that you would ascertain what it conceals!

The Caliph took pity on him and sent him a written note saying, "You will be all right!" This set his mind at rest. But he remained in prison for some time, so he wrote again to the Caliph:[26]

It is as if all people are a compound being with a soul,
having a body to which you are the head.
God's trusted one! Imprisonment is not right,
but you decreed: "You'll be all right!"

The Caliph gave orders that he be set free. Among the verses he wrote in prison are also these:[27]

You are nothing but mercy and wellbeing,
may God increase you in happiness and nobility!
I am told you think well of me: [232]
now who will make me see a sign[28] of your good will?
Those who see a smile from you
deserve not to be alarmed with bad news.
If only you felt pain for my sake, you would give me relief,
may God give you relief on the Day of Resurrection!

When al-Rashīd had him detained, he put a servant called Māhir in charge of him, who treated him well. The poet said,[29]

The good care from him is enough for me
to give fruit from what he planted:
He was an intercessor for another,
and he has become an intercessor for himself.

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26 Abū l-ʿAtāhiyah, *Ashʿār*, 565; Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 792; idem, *ʿUyūn*, i, 82; al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, iii, 960; *Aghānī*, iv, 64 (5 vss.); al-Mubarrad, *Kāmil*, ii, 438 (vs. 1); al-Bayhaqī, *Maḥāsin*, 533; al-Āmidī, *Muwāzanah*, iii, 28; al-Ḥuṣrī, *Zahr*, 384; Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, *Bahjat al-majālis*, ii, 109.

27 Abū l-ʿAtāhiyah, *Ashʿār*, 639; Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 792–793; al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, iv, 220.

28 *ʿAlāmah* also means "signature" and "signed apostille".

29 Abū l-ʿAtāhiyah, *Ashʿār*, 571; Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 793 (where the servant's name is Thābit).

One of the literati told me: Abū l-ʿAtāhiyah gave al-Rashīd a pair of sandals, writing to him:[30]

> Sandals! I send them so that you may put them
> on your feet, to walk with them to glory.
> If I could make my own cheeks their straps
> my cheeks would be their straps.

A man heard Abū l-ʿAtāhiyah recite this verse:[31]

> Look around where you will:
> you will only see misers.

He alluded to the Sura of the Night Journey:[32] *Even if you possessed the treasures of my Lord's mercy, then you would still hold back for fear of spending. Humans are ever niggardly*. The man said, "Abū l-ʿAtāhiyah, you have made all people misers!" The poet replied, "Show me one to belie me!"

Muḥammad ibn Rāshid al-Kātib told me, on the authority of Ibn Jabalah al-Banawī:[33] Abū l-ʿAtāhiyah came to the door of Aḥmad ibn Yūsuf, the state secretary of al-Maʾmūn,[34] but he was barred from entering. Then he said,

> When will a morning visitor ever receive what he needs from you?
> One half of you is inaccessible and the other half sleeps.

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30 Abū l-ʿAtāhiyah, *Ashʿār*, 527–528; al-Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān*, iii, 121 (where the sandals are said to have been sent to al-Maʾmūn); Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 793; al-Washshāʾ, *Muwashshā*, 181 (where the poet-sender is Saʿīd ibn Ḥumayd and the recipient a friend of his); *Aghānī*, iv, 79–80 (where the verses are said to have been inscribed on the sandal straps and where the recipient is the vizier al-Faḍl ibn al-Rabīʿ, who in turn gives them to al-Amīn); al-Jahshiyārī, *Wuzarāʾ*, 295; Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, vi. 283.

31 Abū l-ʿAtāhiyah, *Ashʿār*, 313 (in a poem of 15 vss.); Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 793; Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, ii, 346, vi, 194; *Aghānī*, iv, 78 (an extended version of the anecdote, where the hearer is the famous singer Mukhāriq ibn Yaḥyā); al-Rāghib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, i, 368.

32 Q al-Isrāʾ 17:100.

33 For the anecdote and the verse see Abū l-ʿAtāhiyah, *Ashʿār*, 633–634 (with a preceding verse); (ps.-)al-Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥijāb*, 65; Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 793; idem, *ʿUyūn*, i, 85; Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, i, 73 (tr. Boullata, i, 54); al-Bayhaqī, *Maḥāsin*, 163; al-Ḥuṣrī, *Zahr*, 488; idem, *Jamʿ*, 236; Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, *Bahjat al-majālis*, i, 328.

34 On Aḥmad ibn Yūsuf (d. 213/828) see *EI2*, i, 279 (D. Sourdel). In *ʿIqd* it is "a certain Hāshimite" instead of Aḥmad ibn Yūsuf.

This verse became widely known and people recited it among themselves. Then Aḥmad apologised to him. [233]

Among his admonitions and wisdom poetry are the following verses:[35]

Silent tombs admonished you, {108}
mute times announced your death.
They spoke of faces that decay
and forms broken up.
They showed you your grave among
the graves, and you still alive, not yet dead!

He composed the following poem (none better was ever heard) on someone being slow to fulfil a promise:[36]

I am there for those who want me,[37]
I see my friend as he sees me.
I do not consider, as long as I am my own master,
the status of those who do not consider my status.[38]
Who can put his hope in the furthest ones
if the nearest do not gain his benefits?
I have, until I die, a livelihood
that will not pass me by if people make an effort.
Nobody who is no good except for lowliness
will ever be honoured.
Seek sufficiency in God, rather than in So-and-so,
or So-and-so, and So-and-so!

35 Abū l-ʿAtāhiyah, *Ashʿār*, 78–79; Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 794; idem, *ʿUyūn*, ii, 306; al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, iv, 222; al-Māwardī, *Adab al-dīn wa-l-dunyā*, 130; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Mudʾhish*, 216. The verses are also ascribed to Abū Nuwās, see his *Dīwān*, ii, 171–172, said to have been found on his grave; cf. also al-Iṣfahānī, *Adab al-ghurabāʾ*, 56 (tr. Crone & Moreh, 50); Ibn al-Anbārī, *Nuzhat al-alibbāʾ*, 67; Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, *Bahjat al-majālis*, ii, 339; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, viii, 490.

36 Abū l-ʿAtāhiyah, *Ashʿār*, 384–385 (with an additional verse after vs. 3); Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 793–794; al-Dīnawarī, *Mujālasah*, iii, 180 (vss. 1–2, 4, 6–8, 10–13); the same vss. in Ibn ʿArabī, *Muḥāḍarat al-abrār*, i, 106.

37 Reading, with Ibn Qutaybah, *li-man baghānī* instead of *li-man yarānī* ("to those who see me"), with awkward repetition of the rhyme word. Ibn ʿArabī, *Muḥāḍarat al-abrār* has *li-man yuʿānī* ("to those who suffer").

38 I am not certain of the interpretation of *lastu arā mā malaktu amrī* (*ṭarfī* in the other sources) | *makāna man lā yarā makānī*.

Wealth, when lawful, upholds
one's face, one's honour, and one's tongue;
Poverty is a room on which there is a lock
of which the key is impotence and negligence.
Do not omit to earn lawful gain
about which you have clarity.
Subsistence from God has ways
that are guaranteed by God.
Praise be He, who is always exalted
and who has no second in exaltedness.
He has decreed the fates of death for His creatures,
for everything but He will vanish.
My Lord, whenever we have wept for a time
we weep for another time.

[234] He also said:[39]

My own death is announced to me by the dealings
of the days, from one event to another.
So why is it that I am not concerned with myself
and why is it that I do not fear death, why?
I know for certain that I will not live forever,
but I find that I do not care.
Do I not learn a lesson from what is mentioned about people
of whom I thought at times, who have vanished together?
It is as if the one who nurses me has already stood up, to move
my bier between four hurrying ones,[40]
With behind me weeping women, grieving,
as if their hearts were in frying pans!
Exalted be God! Salm ibn ʿAmr,
greed has humbled the necks of men![41]
Suppose the whole world were brought to you, as a favour,
will it not eventually vanish?

39 Abū l-ʿAtāhiyah, *Ashʿār*, 295–297; al-Dīnawarī, *Mujālasah*, vii, 354–355 (vss. 1–5, 8–9); Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, *Bahjat al-majālis*, ii, 318 (vss. 1–3, 7).

40 *Bayna arbaʿatin ʿijālī*, see also the verse by ʿAlī ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Baghawī in Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, xiv, 14: *Tahādā bayna arbaʿatin ʿijālin | ilā qabrin fa-tamlaʾunā surūrā*.

41 This and the next verse are also in the section on Salm al-Khāsir, above, § 15.

So why do you hope for something that will not last,
all too soon changed for the worse by the days?
I have put people to the test, generation after generation,
and I saw none but deceitful and hateful people;[42]
I have tasted the bitterness of all things
but nothing is more bitter than begging,
And I have seen nothing that is more terrible
or more loathsome than the enmity of others.

[Abū l-ʿAtāhiyah heard the verse by Jamīl ibn Maʿmar:[43]

My two friends, have you ever seen, in your lifetime, before me,
one who was killed and who, out of love, weeps for his killer?

Then Abū l-ʿAtāhiyah took this motif in its entirety and said,[44]

Ah, who has ever seen, before me, one who is killed and who
weeps for his killer from his ardent passion?]

Abū l-ʿAtāhiyah's poems are very numerous, but they are well known and readily found, and what I have quoted should suffice.

42 Vss. 10–12 are not in *Ashʿār*; they are attributed to the pre-Islamic poet al-Afwah (al-Awdī) in al-Māwardī, *Adab al-dīn wa-l-dunyā*, 182–183 and attributed to ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib in other sources (ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib, *Dīwān*, 159); see also al-Ibshīhī, *Mustaṭraf*, i, 160.

43 This bracketed passage is taken from the *Mukhtaṣar* (ed. Farrāj, Appendix, 436–437). Jamīl ibn Maʿmar (d. 82/701), a poet of the tribe of ʿUdhrah, is famous for his love of Buthaynah, who loved him as well but was not allowed to marry him. The verse is in his *Dīwān*, 176.

44 Abū l-ʿAtāhiyah, *Dīwān*, 617. See *Aghānī*, iv, 45, where Jaʿfar ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Muhallabī, hearing Abū l-ʿAtāhiyah recite his verses, comments on the plagiarism, which Abū l-ʿAtāhiyah admits, smiling.

{109} 37 **Muslim ibn al-Walīd al-Anṣārī**[1]

He is Ṣarīʿ al-Ghawānī ("Slain-by-the-Fair"). Ṣāliḥ ibn Muḥammad al-ʿAwfī told
[235] me: [Ibrāhīm ibn Abī Yaḥyā al-Madanī al-Anṣārī told me:][2] ‖ Muslim ibn al-Walīd Ṣarīʿ al-Ghawānī was an excellent, proficient, outstanding panegyrist, the first to make wider use of the novel style (*al-badīʿ*), for it was Bashshār ibn Burd who first introduced it. Then came Muslim, who filled his poetry with it; subsequently Abū Tammām used it excessively, overstepping the proper amount.[3] The majority of Muslim's panegyric poems were composed for Yazīd ibn Mazyad, Dāwūd ibn Yazīd,[4] the Barmakids, [and their secretary, Muḥammad ibn Manṣūr ibn Ziyād].[5] He also composed praise poems on the caliphs.

Ibn al-Mughīr[6] told me: Muslim ibn al-Walīd praised al-Rashīd with his famous poem with rhyme-letter L. Having entered into his presence, he recited it and when he reached the verse:[7]

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1 Abū l-Walīd Muslim ibn al-Walīd al-Anṣārī (d. 208/823), nicknamed Ṣarīʿ al-Ghawānī ("Slain-by-the-Fair"), a *mawlā* of the Anṣār, born in Kufa and active mainly in Baghdad, was a major poet of mostly panegyric and amatory poems. Abū l-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī says (*Aghānī*, xix, 31) that "he was, so they say, the first to compose poetry known as *al-badīʿ*" (the "novel, original" style, on which Ibn al-Muʿtazz wrote his seminal treatise *al-Badīʿ*), echoing statements by Ibn Qutaybah and Ibn al-Muʿtazz in the present section. One critic even states that "Muslim ibn al-Walīd was the first who corrupted (*afsada*) poetry" (*Aghānī*, xix, 31). His style, however, is traditional in some ways and not marked by much artifice (see Heinrichs, "Muslim b. al-Walīd und *badīʿ*"). He has entries in Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 832–842; *Aghānī*, xix, 30–72; Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, i, 505–506; al-Marzubānī, *Muwashshaḥ*, 444–445; idem, *Muʿjam*, 277–278; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, xv, 116–118; Ibn Shākir, *Fawāt*, iv, 136–142; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xxv, 563–573. See GAS, ii, 528–529; EI2, vii, 694–695 (I. Kratschkowsky); EAL, 557 (P.F. Kennedy). His *Dīwān* has been edited by De Goeje (1875) and Sāmī al-Dahhān, with the commentary of Abū l-ʿAbbās Walīd ibn ʿĪsā al-Ṭabīkhī al-Andalusī (d. 352/963), *Sharḥ Dīwān Ṣarīʿ al-Ghawānī*, called *Dīwān* hereafter.

2 The parenthesis is taken from the *Mukhtaṣar*, where the first informant is called al-Kūfī instead of al-ʿAwfī (ed. Farrāj, Appendix, 437).

3 Abū Tammām has an entry below, §51. In his *al-Badīʿ* Ibn al-Muʿtazz says (p. 1) that *badīʿ* was not invented by Bashshār, Muslim, or Abū Nuwās but was already found in older poetry. "Then, after them, Abū Tammām Ḥabīb ibn Aws al-Ṭāʾī became so infatuated with *badīʿ* that he mastered it and used it profusely. In some cases he did well, and in others poorly" (tr. Suzanne P. Stetkevych in her *Abū Tammām and the Poetics of the ʿAbbāsid Age*, 21).

4 For Yazīd ibn Mazyad see above, §34, p. 310. The MS and the editions have "Dāwūd ibn Mazyad", which is an error for Dāwūd ibn Yazīd (ibn Ḥātim al-Muhallabī, d. 205/820–821), on whom see above, p. 220, §26.

5 The parenthesis is taken from the *Mukhtaṣar* (ed. Farrāj, 437). Muḥammad ibn Manṣūr ibn Ziyād is an error for Muḥammad ibn Ziyād ibn Manṣūr, on whom see below, p. 364.

6 Vowelling uncertain; the *Mukhtaṣar* has "Yaʿqūb ibn Isḥāq told me: My father told me:".

7 For the poem, see Muslim, *Dīwān*, 33–43 (35 vss. of which this is the last). See also Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 832.

Is the good life anything but youthful passion in the evening
and, on the morrow, being slain by the wine glass and large eyes?

the Caliph said to him, "You are slain by the fair women!" This became his nickname, to the extent of being known only by this. It is said that al-Rashīd wrote down his poetry with gold ink. The poem opens with:

Pass round the cup to me, don't drink before me!
And do not demand blood-revenge from the woman who kills me![8]

It is a fine, wonderful, and famous poem that is widely known. Among verses by him that are admired—but all his poetry is beautiful like brocade, unrivalled by anyone—are these:[9]

I was, the day Ismāʿīl said farewell,
like a sheath on a day of battle, left by the blade.[10]
If I shall call on others, now that he is gone, or visit them,
I'll be like a wild animal driven to humans by drought.

This is a motif such as a poet will not come upon in a thousand years. On Yazīd ibn Mazyad he says, in a wonderful, beautiful, and long poem:[11]

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8 The verse uses the conventional dual form for the imperatives. *Qātilatī*, "my female killer" could also refer to the wine, which is feminine in Arabic, but the rest of the poem is about loving a real woman. This and other verses of the poem are often quoted in the sources. See e.g. Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, v, 398–399, where the author adds his emulation of Muslim's poem.

9 Muslim, *Dīwān*, 332–333 (first and last verse of a piece of ten verses); often quoted. See e.g. al-Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān*, iv, 48; Ibn al-Jarrāḥ, *Waraqah*, 86; Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 833, idem, *ʿUyūn*, iii, 33; Ibn Abī ʿAwn, *Tashbīhāt*, 387; Ibn Ṭabāṭabā, *ʿIyār*, 147; al-ʿAskarī, *Dīwān al-maʿānī*, i, 71; idem, *Ṣināʿatayn*, 254–255; al-Qālī, *Amālī*, i, 167; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, xv, 118.

10 Ismāʿīl ibn Jarīr was an intimate friend and drinking companion of the poet (Ibn al-Jarrāḥ, *Waraqah*, 86). Ibn Abī ʿAwn mentions Ibn Jāmiʿ (presumably meaning the singer Ismāʿīl ibn Jāmiʿ) instead. Al-ʿAskarī, *Dīwān al-maʿānī*, says it is an elegy (*marthiyah*) and reads *wafāt* ("death") instead of *wadāʿ* ("farewell") or *firāq* ("parting") as in the other sources, including his *Ṣināʿatayn*.

11 They are vss. 30, 35, 37, 40–41, 73, 79 of a poem of 79 verses, *Dīwān*, 1–23, on which see Heinrichs, "Muslim b. al-Walīd", 221–244 (with German translation). See also Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 834–835; Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, i, 109; Ibn Abī ʿAwn, *Tashbīhāt*, 154; al-Ṣūlī, *Akhbār Abī Tammām* (ed. & tr. Gruendler), 114–115; *Aghānī*, xix, 40; al-Marzubānī, *Muʿjam*, 277; al-Āmidī, *Muwāzanah*, i, 74, 98, 299; al-ʿAskarī, *Dīwān al-maʿānī*, i, 116–117; idem, *Ṣināʿatayn*, 211; Ibn Shākir, *Fawāt*, iv, 136–141; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xxv, 564–572 (a version of 81 vss.). Especially the first verse of Ibn al-Muʿtazz's quotation is often quoted.

Overpowering lives on a day of thrown-up dust,
as if he were a death-date swiftly overtaking hope.[12]
[236] People travel only to his room,
like to a House to which all roads lead.[13]
He clothes the swords with the blood of pact-breakers
and makes heads into crowns for spears.
He has accustomed birds to habits they trust,
for they follow him wherever he travels.[14]
You will see him, safely in a double coat of mail,
but never safe from being called upon in a hurry.
God has on His earth a mountain
and you and your son are the twin cornerstones of that mountain.[15]
You have proved true my expectation and the expectations of others;[16]
your generosity has taken down my camel's saddle.

The beginning of this poem is:

I was given a loose rein[17] of an amorous profligate in youthful love,
and the rebukers tucked up their robes, ready to rebuke.

As we said, it is a famous poem, so we only quote these verses, the highlights of the poem, although the poem as a whole is in fact itself a highlight.

Widely known are the following lampooning verses:[18]

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12 There is internal rhyme (*muhaj*, *rahaj*; *ajal*, *amal*), with implied antithesis of *ajal* and *amal*. *Muhjah* (pl. *muhaj*) means "lifeblood, heartblood, heart, soul, life".

13 The "House" is Mecca according to the commentator; or rather the Kaaba, which is often called "God's House".

14 The motif of birds following an army, expecting carrion (also known to European literatures) is common in Arabic; see e.g. al-Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥayawān*, vi, 321–325 and Ibn al-Athīr, *Istidrāk*, 9–11 for examples, including Muslim's verse.

15 The commentator identifies the "mountain" as the Caliph.

16 As Heinrichs remarks, the repeated verb (*ṣaddaqta*) may have optative force here: "May you prove true …" The following image of unsaddling the camel refers to the end of the conventional poetic journey to the patron.

17 Farrāj vowels the verb as an active (*ajrartu*), whereas most or all other sources have a passive (*ujrirtu*).

18 Muslim, *Dīwān*, 239 (5 vss.); see Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 833; idem, *ʿUyūn*, iii, 153–154 (vss. 2–4). He lampoons Mūsā ibn Khāzim (ibn Khuzaymah) al-Tamīmī, who is mentioned by al-Yaʿqūbī (*Tārīkh*, ii, 496, tr. *The Works*, 1158) as one of al-Rashīd's generals. His father Khāzim ibn Khuzaymah, one of al-Manṣūr's generals, had another son called Khuzaymah.

Guest of Mūsā, Khuzaymah's brother, keep the fast!
Or get some food for yourself, if you are not fasting!
He was silent, pensive, when I came to him to praise him,
and he did not say "No!", let alone "Yes."
[He turned ashen-grey, for fear of being asked, just as
a dying, suffering man turns ashen-grey.][19]
I was afraid that, if he died, retaliation for him would be my fate,
so I stood up, aiming for the nearest way to escape.
If all the treasures of the land were in his hand
he would still offer his poverty as an excuse.

Choice verses by him are also the following:[20] {110}

Matters will not be slow in taking what you hoped would return,
even though the gentleness of an unhurried person helps you.[21]
Time will take what it gave, make murky what it made pure,
and corrupt whatever it stretches its hand toward.
Be not deluded by the gifts of Time,
for it leaves nothing of what it gave to anyone.

The following verses are considered charming:[22] [237]

I mixed it with the rainclouds' saliva and it spun
two textures, loosened and knotted.
Welcome to the arrival of grey hair,
even though it appears on an unloved person.[23]
I shall not combine self-restraint with red wine: I am now
content with water, instead of the water of grape-bunches.

19 I have added this verse from the *Dīwān*, which explains the next verse.

20 Muslim, *Dīwān*, 297 (4 vss.); Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 833–834; Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, iii, 308; al-ʿAskarī, *Ṣināʿatayn*, 297.

21 Reading, with the *Dīwān*, *wa-in* ("even if") instead of *idhā* ("if") as in the other sources; the translation is tentative.

22 Muslim, *Dīwān*, 152–153, being vss. 4, 6–7 of a poem of 100 vss. in praise of Dāwūd ibn Yazīd al-Muhallabī. See Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 834; al-ʿAskarī, *Ṣināʿatayn*, 297 (vs. 1); al-Murtaḍā, *Amālī*, i, 608. Vs. 1 describes the customary mixing of wine with water, with *maḥlūl* ("loosened, dissolved") and *maʿqūd* ("knotted, tied") apparently describing the gradual mixing in the glass (as the commentator explains).

23 *Wa-in tarā'at bi-shakhṣin ghayri mawdūdī*: either the poet means that a grey-haired man is no longer loved by women, or he says "it (viz., grey hair, personified) appears as an unloved person".

Choice verses by him are the following, on al-Faḍl ibn Yaḥyā or al-Faḍl ibn Jaʿfar ibn Yaḥyā:[24]

His right hand drips with generosity,[25] his left with
destruction. The best words are decisive speech.
Swift to put his money in panegyric, he reckons generosity
to be a gain, when miserliness is used for gain.
From Abū l-ʿAbbās's hand riches are asked to fall like rain,
favours are asked to descend, and sword-blades ask to be blooded.
Whenever you wish, you may raise veils from riches
if you visit al-Faḍl, or when al-Faḍl allows it.

Widely transmitted are his verses on a boat:[26]

I removed the horrors of darkness from that horrible place
with a running, carried, carrying virgin.[27]
Coming towards you, she frightens you with a big bull's head,
when she turns her back she delights with two eagle's fore-feathers.
She is lifted by two oars that take her in turns,
her stern kept straight by the checking of the rein.[28]
The east wind resembles it when it faces
the east wind's breeze, proceeding like a bride to her boudoir.[29]
We travelled by sea to him, at last,
and it brought us from one sea to another sea.[30]

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24 Muslim, *Dīwān*, 263, 265, 267, being vss. 35, 37, 50, 79 of a poem of 79 vss., according to the superscript in the *Dīwān* in praise of the Barmakid al-Faḍl ibn Jaʿfar ibn Yaḥyā. See also Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 836 (6 vss.), *Aghānī*, xix, 59 (8 vss.), in both of which it is al-Faḍl ibn Yaḥyā (whose *kunyah* was Abū l-ʿAbbās; I was unable to find al-Faḍl ibn Jaʿfar's *kunyah*); al-ʿAskarī, *Ṣināʿatayn*, 299; al-Ḥuṣrī, *Zahr*, 1067–1068.

25 *Nadā* means "dew" as well as "generosity".

26 Muslim, *Dīwān*, 107, 109–111 (vss. 14, 16, 19, 23, 29 of a poem of 29 vss.); Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 837–838; al-Ḥuṣrī, *Zahr*, 1072.

27 That is, with a boat (*jāriyah*, as in Q al-Ḥāqqah 69:11; *jāriyah* also means "girl" or "concubine") that is carried (on the water) and carrying (*ḥāmil*, also "pregnant"), a virgin (*bikr*) because on its maiden voyage.

28 *Lijām* normally means "bridle, rein"; the commentator explains that it refers here to the rudder or centre-board (*rijl al-markab*, called by sailors al-*ishbāṭah*). See WKAS, *Lām*, 252–253. Instead of *kabḥ* Eghbal prefers to read *kabj* (a Persian word that, among other things, means "a stick for stirring beer"), but *kabḥ*, "checking (the rein)" is clearly correct.

29 The east wind (*al-ṣabā*) often has the same pleasant connotations as "zephyr" (the west wind) has in European literatures.

30 The passage has the function of the traditional *raḥīl*, the desert journey with camel

The following verses are considered attractive, with the beautiful comparisons and fine motif:[31]

Our wine jug stole the neck of a female gazelle,
and the one who passed it round imitated a gazelle with his eyes.[32]
He pours you a cup of love with his glances, [238]
and again pours wine with his hand.

Choice verses by him are also the following:[33]

If you two want to pour me wine,
then do not kill it: all carrion is forbidden![34]
We mixed the blood of the vine with our blood,
and thus blood shows on us the colour of blood.

An original motif transmitted as his:[35]

If you want to pour me something other than wine,[36] then pour me
a glass from your mouth that I can delight in, one that will heal me!
Your eyes are my wine, your words are my fragrant herbs,
the colour of your cheeks is that of roses—that is enough for me.

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description to the patron (whose identity here is unknown). The second "sea" is a metaphor for the hopefully generous patron. As Ibn al-Athīr, *Mathal*, iii, 251 points out, al-Buḥturī adopted the motif ("They travelled on the Euphrates to another Euphrates …", *Dīwān*, 74).

31 Muslim, *Dīwān*, 204 (vss. 39 and 37 of a poem of 83 vss.); Ibn al-Muʿtazz, *Fuṣūl al-tamāthīl*, 51; Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 838; al-ʿAskarī, *Dīwān al-maʿānī*, i, 311 (vs. 1); al-Ḥuṣrī, *Zahr*, 287.

32 Farrāj's text (*fa-zālā*) is an error for *ghazālā*.

33 Muslim, *Dīwān*, 179 (vss. 20–21 of a poem of 54 vss.); Ibn al-Muʿtazz, *Fuṣūl al-tamāthīl*, 28; Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 838; Ibn Wakīʿ, *Munṣif*, 148; al-ʿAskarī, *Ṣināʿatayn*, 436; al-Jurjānī, *Kināyāt*, 371–372; al-Raffāʾ, *Muḥibb*, iv, 59.

34 Killing wine stands for mixing it with water. *Mayt*, "carrion" alludes to Q al-Baqarah 2:173: *He has forbidden to you carrion* (al-maytah) …; i.e., animals that are not ritually slaughtered. Paradoxically, in the next verse wine is called "blood" (a very common comparison), whereas (real) blood is also forbidden, as the quoted Qur'anic verse continues. Drinking this "blood" causes a flush of blood in the drinker.

35 Muslim, *Dīwān*, 343; Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 838–839; *Aghānī*, xix, 60 (5 vss., on a female servant of al-Faḍl ibn Yaḥyā, who kindly donated her to the poet as a reward for the poem).

36 The MS and the editions have *ʿayna l-rāḥi* ("wine itself" or perhaps "choice wine") but I prefer reading *ghayra l-rāḥī*, with *Shiʿr* and *Aghānī*.

Among his novel poems is also the following:[37]

The women disappeared, being above suspicions,
their bracelets were choked, no anklet uttered a sound.[38]
And when we met the night gave up the ghost
with a face like the face of the sun, which has no peer,
{111} And a mole like the mole of the full moon, on the face of its like,[39]
of which we found our desires; spending freely made peace with us.[40]
There was water like the sun itself, which does not admit impurity;[41]
when the east wind moves over it you would think it would flow over,
Coming from bright, laughing clouds; when they come together
their rain-showers tell each other their secrets.
With it we broke the edge of the chilled wine, which had been a bully,
and it clothed it with mildness, with still brutishness in its mildness.[42]

Admired are the following verses from his poem with rhyme letter L on al-Rashīd:[43]

A wine that grants its drinkers sovereignty,
of Jewish relationship by marriage, with a Muslim husband;[44]

37 Muslim, *Dīwān*, 261 (vss. 1–2, being vss. 11–12 of the poem on al-Faḍl ibn Yaḥyā, with verses about a boat quoted above), 332 (vss. 3–6, apparently belonging to the same poem but not in the version of the *Dīwān*); Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 835–836; al-ʿAskarī, *Ṣināʿatayn*, 103, 442 (vs. 3), 298 (vss. 1b, 2, 4, 6); al-Raffāʾ, *Muḥibb*, i, 60 (vs. 3).

38 I adopt the reading of the *Dīwān* and Ibn Qutaybah, *ʿalā ghaybi l-ẓunūni*, instead of *ʿalā raybi l-manūni* ("by the fickleness of Fate") of the MS and the editions, on the principle of preferring the *lectio difficilior* (my translation is tentative). The choking bracelets and silent anklets allude to the pleasant plumpness of the women's limbs. It is not clear why the women disappeared (*khafīna*) and I wonder if one should read *khafitna* ("they fell silent, became still"), which would fit the rest of the verse; but all published sources have *khafīna*.

39 The poet now seems to describe a single woman, or perhaps a male cupbearer, whose face is beautiful like the full moon.

40 Tentative translation of *fa-ḥājazanā l-badhlū*.

41 I read, with the *Dīwān* and Ibn Qutaybah, *wa-māʾin ka-ʿayni l-shamsi lā yaqbalu l-qadhā*, instead of *wa-māʾin ka-māʾi l-shamsi lā yaqbalu l-adhā*, as in the MS and the editions.

42 The poet uses the antonymous pair *ḥilm* ("self-restraint, mildness, wisdom") and *jahl* ("ignorance, impetuosity, brutishness").

43 Muslim, *Dīwān*, 35–36, 38 (vss. 8, 12, 11 18 of the poem mentioned above, p. 338); Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 836.

44 The wine makes the drinkers feel grand like kings. The wine (feminine/female in Arabic)

We sent her one from us to ask for her hand in marriage,
and he brought her back, proudly,[45] leisurely.
She was deposited in a jar, standing [239]
on one foot between the vines, smitten by her.[46]
We broke open an eye for her in the jar, and it let flow
what looked like tongues of snakes fearing being killed.[47]

Choice verses by him are the following, lampooning Saʿīd ibn Salm:[48]

Because I love her, I love all stingy people,
even falling in love with Salm's son, Saʿīd!
When asked for a favour, he covers his face
with clothes of baseness, yellow and black.[49]

The motif in the following verses is magic, in delicacy and beauty:[50]

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was perhaps sold by a Jewish wine-seller. Instead of *yahūdiyyati l-aṣhāri* the *Dīwān* has *majūsiyyati l-ansāb*, "with Zoroastrian/Magian lineages" (a reference to "incest": the wine is mixed with the water just as the vine was irrigated with it, cf. Muslim, *Dīwān*, 47, van Gelder, *Close Relationships*, 70).

45 The commentator glosses the rare word *ʿirḍinah* as "walking with a slant, from pride".

46 Like the wine, the one-footed amphora is also personified. Instead of *shaghafan* (Farrāj) the *Dīwān* has *shafaqan* ("in the twilight"); the MS seems to have *sh.f.ʿan*.

47 The *Dīwān* has a different second hemistich: "(it let flow) just as a virgin's eye, without kohl, sheds tears" (the commentator says that the kohl may allude to the black pitch used to seal the jar). The present hemistich, with the snakes, is found in a similar context in a poem by ʿUkkāshah ibn ʿAbd al-Ṣamad al-ʿAmmī (*Aghānī*, iii, 261, Ibn Shākir, *Fawāt*, ii, 456), who was a contemporary of Muslim. Abū Nuwās uses the same comparison in a wine poem (*Dīwān*, iii, 160).

48 Muslim, *Dīwān*, 270 (with a third verse); Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 837; *Aghānī*, xix, 50; al-ʿAskarī, *Ṣināʿatayn*, 416; idem, *Dīwān al-maʿānī*, i, 162. In his *al-Badīʿ*, 61 Ibn al-Muʿtazz attributes the verses to Abū l-ʿAtāhiyah, illustrating the figure of *al-khurūj min maʿnā ilā maʿnā* ("moving from one motif, or theme, to another" here from love to lampooning); see Abū l-ʿAtāhiyah, *Dīwān*, 522. They are also attributed to Abū l-Shamaqmaq, see e.g. al-Ḥātimī, *Ḥilyah*, i, 217; Abū Ṭāhir al-Baghdādī, *Qānūn*, 114; al-Tibrīzī, *Wāfī*, 282; al-Zanjānī, *Miʿyār*, ii, 158, due to a confusion with a poem on Saʿīd ibn Salm with similar rhyme but different metre by Abū l-Shamaqmaq (Grunebaum, "Three Arabic Poets", Pt. 3, 278, 282). Saʿīd ibn Salm (d. 217/832–833) served as governor in several provinces (al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xv, 225).

49 The significance of the colours (red and black in the *Dīwān*, blue and black in *Ṣināʿatayn*) is not clear to me.

50 Muslim, *Dīwān*, 328; Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 839; Ibn Dāwūd, *Zahrah*, 199 (vss. 1–2); Usāmah, *Badīʿ*, 168 (vs. 2, anonymously, illustrating *mukhālafah*, "being contrary to poetic usage").

When we are together we deny our eyes sleep
and we do not close our eyes until we part.
I confess to a sin I do not know,
so that I say what she says, and our words match.
I held back my tears for a sin that she renews
and now every day tears race from my eyes.

Fine are these verses that are transmitted as his:[51]

I have not been consoled for love because I am ignorant of its delight,
nor have I disobeyed it in favour of self-restraint because I am stupid.
O slanderer, whose misdeeds have done good to us:
your caution has saved my eyes' pupils from drowning.[52]

Choice are also his verses about one's soul being overwhelmed by despair, and returning to one's desire:[53]

I revert to hoping for her, as I did before,
whenever desires revert to despair of her.
She saw my eye seem blind to her, so she turned away.
But wasn't it merely because I was afraid of signalling fingers?[54]
I was not stubborn when my soul made her seem beautiful to me,
rather, passion for her willingly occurred.
I became bored with those who blamed me on account of her,
so my ears turned away from them, made deaf to them.[55]

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51 Muslim, *Dīwān*, 328–329 (5 vss. of which these are vss. 5 and 1); Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 839.

52 This verse serves as an illustration of *ḥusn al-taʿlīl* ("assigning a fanciful cause") in several works on rhetoric, see e.g. Mehren, *Rhetorik*, 118; Shihāb al-Dīn Maḥmūd, *Ḥusn al-tawassul*, 223; al-Nābulusī, *Nafaḥāt*, 167 (cf. Cachia's translation in his *The Arch Rhetorician*, 96). The Arabic for "pupil" is *insān* (normally, "human being").

53 Muslim, *Dīwān*, 273 (6 vss., of which these are 1–2, 4, 3, 5); Ibn al-Muʿtazz, *Badīʿ*, 17 (vs. 5 and the additional verse, illustrating *istiʿārah*, metaphor); Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 839–840; Ibn Abī ʿAwn, *Tashbīhāt*, 41; Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, v, 375 (vs. 5); al-ʿAskarī, *Ṣināʿatayn*, 298; idem, *Dīwān al-maʿānī*, i, 253; al-Raffāʾ, *Muḥibb*, i, 252; al-Ḥuṣrī, *Zahr*, 1067; al-Rāghib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ii, 183.

54 I follow Farrāj in reading *ʿamiyy* ("blind") instead of *ghabiyy* (Ibn Qutaybah) or *ghaniyy* (*Dīwān* and the MS). The poet explains that ignoring her was only for fear of pointing fingers of accusing reproachers.

55 Translation of *fa-aṭraqat | lahum udhunun qad ṣumma ʿanhā l-masāmiʿū* uncertain.

So I swore: I shall never forget women who call to youthful love,
when my eye saw her unexpectedly, when the curtain had dropped.[56]

Admired are his verses on renunciation:[57]

So many people we have seen who perished!
Their loved ones wept, and then others wept for them.
They left this world for those after them, [240]
wishing they had done before what they left undone.
So many kings we have seen made common folk,
and common folk turn into kings!
Fate put its breast on them
and they turned round where the celestial sphere turns.[58]

56 The additional verse, often quoted together with vs. 5 is "Then she covered with her hands the fruits of her chest, | like the hands of captives heavily laden with manacles."

57 Muslim, *Dīwān*, 298; Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 841–842; idem, *ʿUyūn*, ii, 306–307; Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, iii, 187–188. The opening hemistich is also found in a poem by the pre-Islamic poet al-Aʿshā Maymūn, *Dīwān*, 38.

58 The sense of the last hemistich (*fa-stadārū ḥaythu dāra l-falakū*) is not entirely clear to me. The section ends with what is obviously a later addition: "He died in the early 200s, as Muḥammad ibn Shākir al-Kutubī said to me [*sic*] in *Fawāt al-wafayāt*" (see Ibn Shākir, *Fawāt*, iv, 136).

{112} 38 Abān ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd al-Lāḥiqī[1]

ʿAbd al-Raḥīm ibn Maymūn al-Baṣrī told me: Abū Hiffān told me: Abān al-Lāḥiqī was an erudite poet, learned, witty, and eloquent, a naturally gifted and able poet who also could extemporise speeches and send excellent letters. He was associated with the Barmakids as their poet, in charge of their awards for poets, which he received from them and then distributed among them.[2] He versified *Kalīlah and Dimnah*, in wonderful words. It is a poem in paired rhyme, found among the people.[3] It had been Yaḥyā ibn Khālid ibn Barmak who had wanted this and instigated it.[4] He had chosen Abū Nuwās to do it. But Abān al-Lāḥiqī went to him and said, "You are a man who is fond of drinking. You cannot do without it, sitting with your friends, drinking wine. It is your delight and enjoyment in this world. Now this book is famous; its prose has never yet been put into verse. If this is done, people will pass it round, look for it, and study it. If you take upon you this job, with your preoccupation with your pleasures and delights, you will not have left enough time for thought and invention, and the
[241] result will not have the desired quality ‖ and beauty. Or, if you take ample time and interest in the work, this will keep you from your amusements, pleasures, and delights. So you should embark on it only after a thorough consideration of yourself!" Abū Nuwās was aware that Abān had given him good counsel, so he relinquished the matter to him and asked to be exempted. Al-Lāḥiqī set to

1 Abān ibn ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd ibn Lāḥiq (d. c. 200/815), a *mawlā* of the Banū Raqāsh, born in Basra, active in Baghdad, composed panegyric poems on the Barmakids. A novel introduction was his use of paired rhyme in *rajaz* metre (*al-muzdawij*) for lengthy narrative poems, such as the versification of the famous collection of animal fables, *Kalīlah wa-Dimnah*, and didactic poems on topics including fasting and cosmology. He exchanged lampoons with Abū Nuwās (see above, in the section on the latter, § 33). He has entries in al-Ṣūlī, *Awrāq*, i, 1–52 (followed by entries on several of his relatives, also poets, 53–74); *Aghānī*, xxiii, 154–167; Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, i, 369–370, 515–516; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, vii, 510–411; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, v, 302–303. See *GAS*, ii, 515–516; *EI2*, i, 2, "Abān b. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd" (S.M. Stern); *EI3*, "Abān al-Lāḥiqī" (Tilman Seidensticker); *EAL*, 1 (J.S. Meisami); *EIr*, "Abān b. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd" (I. Abbas); al-Najjār, *Shuʿarā'*, 11, iii, 229–240; Fariq, "The Poetry of Abān al-Lāḥiqī".

2 See also above, p. 291 and *Aghānī*, xxiii, 156.

3 The "mirror for princes" in the form of a collection of animal fables known as *Kalīlah wa-Dimnah* after the two protagonists of the frame story, ultimately going back to the Sanskrit *Panchatantra*, had been translated from the Pahlavi (Middle Persian) by Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ (d. 137/755 or the year after). For a recent edition and English translation, see Ibn al-Muqaffaʿ, *Kalīlah wa-Dimnā: Fables of Virtue and Vice*. Only a small portion of Abān's versification is preserved, see al-Ṣūlī, *Awrāq*, i, 46–50 (76 couplets, including the story of the lion and the bull) and cf. *Aghānī*, xxiii, 155.

4 As said in *Aghānī*, xxiii, 155, the versification of *Kalīlah wa-Dimnah* was made in order to facilitate its memorisation.

work on it abandoning other things, staying at home without leaving it until he had finished it in four months. It was nearly 15,000 couplets.[5] No one was able to fault anything in his versification, or to say that he had omitted any of the wording or content of the book. He took it to Yaḥyā ibn Khālid, who was greatly pleased with it and gave him one hundred thousand dirhams for it.[6] Abū Nuwās was mortified and envied him; it became clear to him that Abān had duped him. This was the cause of the enmity between them. In all his career Abān had a higher status than Abū Nuwās, who lampooned him in many poems.[7] But Abān's poems on him were never popular, despite the fame of his poetry. Only the following three verses on Abū Nuwās became widespread:[8]

Abū Nuwās is the son of Hāni'
  and his mother is Jullabān.
People know best
  about meaningful letters![9]
If ever I add another verse to this
  as long as I live, then cut off my tongue!

5 Al-Ṣūlī (*Awrāq*, i, 1) mentions three months instead of four, and 14,000 couplets, adding that Abān's son Ḥamdān said that his father would perform the salat with a writing tablet in front of him, fill it with verses, and return to his ritual prayer.

6 In *Aghānī* it is 10,000 dinars.

7 See Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān*, i, 24–26, ii, 78–81, al-Ṣūlī, *Awrāq*, i, 10–12.

8 Al-Ṣūlī, *Awrāq*, i, 33 (where vss. 1 and 3 are said to be by Abān's son Ḥamdān); Ibn Manẓūr, *Akhbār Abī Nuwās*, i, 33–34; Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān*, i, 48 (where the poet is said to be called ʿĀṣim, otherwise unknown); Ḥamzah al-Iṣfahānī, *Tanbīh*, 170 (vss. 1–2); German translation in Wagner, *Abū Nuwās*, 18.

9 *Ḥurūf al-maʿānī*; Wagner: "die geheimnisvollen Bedeutungen" ("mysterious meanings", perhaps thinking of the sense of *ḥurūf* in esotericism in later centuries). In Abū Nuwās's *Dīwān* it is *ghāmiḍāt al-maʿānī* ("obscure, hidden meanings"), in *Tanbīh* and *Akhbār Abī Nuwās* it is *daqīq al-maʿānī* ("subtle meanings"). *Ḥurūf al-maʿānī* is also a linguistic term for "particles" or function words, but here the poet refers to the technique of *taṣḥīf*, the punning alteration of the diacritical dots of a word or phrase, resulting in another sense; it is the subject of Ḥamzah's treatise *al-Tanbīh*. Abū Nuwās had done this, lampooning Abān by suggesting that his name was a misreading of Atān ("she-ass, jenny"; *b* and *t* differ only in their diacritical dots), see Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān*, ii, 80. Abān retaliates, suggesting, as Ḥamzah explains, that Jullabān should be read as *khillu thānī* ("the close friend of another", i.e., not his father). In *Awrāq* the name appears as J.l.yān, which may be a true misreading rather than a sly alteration. Jullabān is said to be a Persian name (Gul-bān, "Holding roses").

39 Manṣūr al-Namarī[1]

[Abū Ṣāliḥ,[2] whose father was a poet, told me: My father told me: ʿAlī ibn al-Jahm said:[3] "I am a better poet than Imruʾ al-Qays, but al-Namarī is a better poet than I am." Al-Suddī Muḥammad ibn Ziyād told me: al-Hilālī told me: Al-Namarī was favoured by al-Rashīd; he was related to him through the mother of al-ʿAbbās ibn ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib, for she was from the tribe of Namir.[4] Hārūn gave him many gifts.] His name is Manṣūr ibn Salamah ibn al-Zibriqān; he came from Raʾs al-ʿAyn.[5] His teknonym was Abū l-Faḍl. Abū Rajāʾ al-Ḍaḥḥāk ibn Rajāʾ al-Kūfī told me: Ibn ʿAbdal told me: One day Manṣūr al-Namarī met al-ʿAttābī,
[242] who was a friend of his.[6] Manṣūr ‖ revered al-ʿAttābī and greatly respected him because of his moderation and piety, and moreover for his learning and the wide extent of his erudition. When Manṣūr greeted him, al-ʿAttābī saw that he looked sad. "I am worried", he explained, "about my wife So-and-so, for she has been in labour for three days now; it is a difficult birth." Al-ʿAttābī said, "Come on! Why have you lost your nerves, while the remedy is at your disposal?" "What is it?" "You must write 'al-Rashīd' on her you-know-what,[7] and the birth will be easy. The delivery is difficult because the passage is too narrow. If you write 'al-
{113} Rashīd' on her vulva it will widen." Al-Namarī was angry and lost his temper. ‖ "Damn you!", he said, "I complain to you about a thing like this and you respond with something like that, frivolously mentioning the name of the Commander

1 Manṣūr ibn Salamah ibn al-Zibriqān, of the tribe of al-Namir ibn Qāsiṭ (d. before 193/809), was a poet of mostly panegyric verse. He has entries in Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 859–862; *Aghānī*, xiii, 139–157; al-Marzubānī, *Akhbār shuʿarāʾ al-Shīʿah*, 79–82; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, xv, 73–78; Ibn Shākir, *Fawāt*, iv, 164–168; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xxvi, 354–361. See GAS, ii, 541–542; EAL, 506–507 (P.F. Kennedy); EI2, vi, 437–438 (T. El-Achèche). His poetry was collected by al-Ṭayyib al-ʿAshshāsh (hereafter Manṣūr al-Namarī, *Shiʿr*).

2 This bracketed passage is taken from the *Mukhtaṣar* (ed. Farrāj, 437–438).

3 On ʿAlī ibn al-Jahm see § 68 below. The Pre-Islamic Imruʾ al-Qays ibn Ḥujr (6th c. AD) is considered by many to be the best Arab poet ever. His long *Muʿallaqah* is perhaps the most famous and most often quoted poem (if one disregards some later poems quoted mainly for religious reasons such as al-Būṣīrī's al-*Burdah* in praise of the Prophet Muḥammad).

4 As is mentioned below, the mother of al-ʿAbbās ibn al-Muṭṭalib, the eponymous ancestor of the Abbasids, was Nutaylah bint Janāb, of Namir.

5 See above, p. 267.

6 Kulthūm ibn ʿAmr al-ʿAttābī has an entry below, § 44. For the following story see *Aghānī*, xiii, 148–119; al-ʿAskarī, *Dīwān al-maʿānī*, i, 59; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, xv, 77–78; Ibn Shākir, *Fawāt*, iv, 167; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xxvi, 360–361.

7 *Al-Rashīd* means "the Rightly Guided one", but here the Caliph is meant (the version of *Aghānī* has "Hārūn al-Rashīd"). In the version of *Dīwān al-maʿānī* Manṣūr is told to go near his wife and say "Hārūn". "You-know-what" is a free rendering of al-ʿAttābī's *matāʿ*, literally "object, thing", often used as a euphemism.

of the Believers!" Al-ʿAttābī replied, "Don't be angry, for you yourself have taught us this! After all, you said the following in your poem on al-Rashīd with rhyme letter *ʿAyn*:[8]

> Rain may let one down, but his promising signs do not let one down;
> or, when in narrow straits, we mention him and they widen!"

(This is from a wonderfully eloquent panegyric poem; nobody has composed anything like the introductory verses on grey hair). But al-Namarī's anger and rage only increased. He went straight away to al-Rashīd and told the story, quoting al-ʿAttābī's words. The Caliph fumed with rage like a cauldron and swore that he would have him killed. Jaʿfar ibn Yaḥyā, who had invited al-ʿAttābī to come to him and who had been on close and intimate terms with him, kept interceding for him with al-Rashīd. In the end, the Caliph forgave him. He was placated and his mind was at ease again. Al-ʿAttābī kept quiet for a while, until he was restored in the Caliph's favour on account of his learning and abundant erudition. He was an inexhaustible sea of knowledge. One evening the Caliph attended a session led by him, to converse with him. Al-Namarī was absent, in al-Raqqah. Al-ʿAttābī told at length about him, mentioning in the course of his talk the Rāfiḍites, "the Rejecters".[9] Then he recited to the Caliph al-Namarī's poem that begins:[10]

> Sheep among the people, that graze untended!
> They divert themselves with falsehood.
> The Prophet's descendants are killed [243]
> but they expect the murderer will gain Paradise forever!
> Woe to you, murderer of al-Ḥusayn!
> You have brought back a burden that makes its bearer totter.
> What a present you gave Aḥmad in
> his grave, the hot pain of the bereaved![11]

8 The verse is vs. 17 of a poem of 70 vss., see Manṣūr al-Namarī, *Shiʿr*, 95–103; some more verses are quoted below.

9 Al-Rāfiḍah or al-Rawāfiḍ is a term that refers to the Shi'ites, who reject the legitimacy of the rule of the first three caliphs, Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, and ʿUthmān (there are other explanations of the name). The text has *al-rawāfiḍ Muḥammadan*, "those who reject Muḥammad", which I cannot explain, and I have ignored *Muḥammadan*.

10 Manṣūr al-Namarī, *Shiʿr*, 121–123 (16 vss., of which Ibn al-Muʿtazz quotes 1–15); Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 860 (16 vss.); see also *Aghānī*, xiii, 147; al-Iṣfahānī, *Maqātil*, 427; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, xv, 75–76; Ibn Shākir, *Fawāt*, iv, 166.

11 Aḥmad is the Prophet Muḥammad, maternal grandfather of al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī, the principal Shi'ite martyr.

With what face will you meet the Prophet,
having taken part, with the others, in his killing?
Come on, seek his intercession tomorrow,
or else go and drink from his basin with the others![12]
I have no doubts about the case of the murdered,
but I have doubts about the stay-behinds.
Would that my soul were al-Ḥusayn's ransom, on the morning
he met his death, a meeting without a returning!
That was a day that with its sword-edge caused the loss
of Islam's hump and neck.[13]
How much longer, woman, will you hurry and say:
"Hey, take revenge on those men, hurry!"
God does not hurry, though you hurry;
your Lord is not heedless of what you think.
Some reproach me for loving Aḥmad's sons:
dust in the reproacher's mouth!
Once I believed what you believed,
but I found your belief to be of no avail.
Your belief is being churlish to the Prophet; and someone
churlish to the Prophet's kin is not like one who joins them.

Then al-ʿAttābī reached the verses that mention Fāṭimah (peace be upon her), the matter of Fadak, Abū Bakr, and ʿUmar, and where the poet asserts that the two last-mentioned wronged her, which is this verse:[14]

She was wronged, though God is her supporter!
She makes her eyes turn round, filled with tears![15]

12 On the Day of Judgement Muḥammad acts as an intercessor for the believers, who meet him at a basin (*ḥawḍ*), as mentioned in the Hadith.

13 Islam is compared to a camel, having lost its noblest parts.

14 After the Prophet's death, his daughter Fāṭimah, supported by her husband ʿAlī, maintained that she should inherit Fadak, an agricultural settlement in the Hijaz, but her claim was overruled by Abū Bakr. ʿUmar assigned Fadak to both al-ʿAbbās (ancestor of the Abbasids) and ʿAlī, who quarrelled over it. See *EI2*, ii, 725–727, "Fadak" (L. Veccia Vaglieri). "God is her supporter" alludes to Q al-Isrāʾ 17:26: "*Give relatives their due*", which Shi'ites believe to refer to the matter of Fadak.

15 *Tudīru arjāʾa muqlatin ḥāfil*; other readings have *qarīru* (Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*), or *nadhīru* (De Goeje's earlier edition of the same, 547), which should be rejected; cf. a verse by Kuthayyir: *Thumma stadāra ʿalā arjāʾi muqlatihā | mubādiran khalasāti l-ṭarfi yastabiqū* (Ibn Sallām, *Ṭabaqāt*, 462).

Then al-Rashīd said to him, "'Attābī, who is the poet?" He replied, "Commander of the Believers, it is your enemy, who believes that he is your kinsman." "Damn that son of a so-and-so!" said the Caliph, "He incites people to rebel against me! He hides his enmity from me and makes a show of being related to me! He has received a fortune from me, having such status." Manṣūr ‖ traced his {114}
relationship to al-Rashīd through a maternal line, via Nutaylah al-Namariyyah, the mother of al-ʿAbbās ibn ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib. He had made encomiums on al-Rashīd with fine ‖ panegyric poems unequalled by anyone, and the Caliph [244]
had rewarded him with handsome gifts. But al-Namarī was secretly an Imamite;[16] he eulogised the family of the Messenger and made insinuating remarks on the early generations[17] in his poetry. Al-Rashīd only became aware of this when it became frequent; and this happened on that day. Al-ʿAttābī started to goad the Caliph, mentioning Manṣūr's beliefs and reciting his poems on the Ṭālibids,[18] one piece after another. Then al-Rashīd summoned Abū ʿIṣmah, the Shi'ite, who belonged to the Zaydiyyah, of the Shi'ah of the Abbasids.[19] "Go this instant to al-Raqqah", he said, "and arrest Manṣūr al-Namarī. Pull his tongue from its root, cut off his hand and his foot, and then cut off his head and bring it to me, but crucify his body there!" Abū ʿIṣmah left, but when he arrived at the city gate of al-Raqqah, entering the town, he was met with the bier of al-Namarī that came towards him. So he returned to al-Rashīd and informed him. "Now when you found him a corpse" said the Caliph, "why didn't you burn him?"[20]

Manṣūr says in a panegyric poem on al-Rashīd:[21]

16 i.e., a Shi'ite, believing that the Imams (ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib and his male descendants) ought to be the leaders of the Islamic community.

17 *Al-salaf*, the leading early Muslims recognised as authorities by what became Sunnah Islam.

18 The descendants of Abū Ṭālib, father of ʿAlī and the ancestor of Shi'ite imams.

19 Ḥammād ibn Sālim Abū ʿIṣmah, mentioned as a commander by al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, iii, 678, and as commander of the guard under al-Amīn in Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿah, *ʿUyūn*, ii, i, 366 (tr. iii, i, 363, where the note wrongly rejects the reading al-Shīʿī). The Zaydīs were "moderate" Shi'ites, called after Zayd ibn ʿAli ibn al-Ḥusayn (killed 122/740 by the Umayyads). They generally opposed Abbasid rule, but in the early days "revenge for Zayd became one of the slogans of the ʿAbbāsid revolution" (*EI2*, xi, 474, in entry "Zayd b. ʿAlī b. al-Ḥusayn"), which seems to explain the phrase "Shi'ah of the Abbasids" (*Shīʿat Banī l-ʿAbbās*).

20 In *Aghānī*, xiii, 149 the angry Caliph wants to have the poet's corpse exhumed and burned, but his vizier al-Faḍl ibn al-Rabīʿ persuades him to desist.

21 They are vss. 64, 66, 65, 68–70 of a poem of 70 verses (of which vs. 17 is quoted above), see Manṣūr al-Namarī, *Shiʿr*, 95–103, al-Shayzarī, *Jamharah*, 37–39. Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 859 quotes vss. 64–70. See also *Aghānī*, xiii, 145, 147.

Son of the Imams after the Prophet, son
of the Legatees, whether people confirm or reject![22]
Were it not for ʿAdī and Taym the caliphate would not
have come to Umayyah, who pressed the teats and sucked![23]
The Caliphate was the inheritance of your father,
rather than Taym's; God's forgiveness is broad!
The family of ʿAlī has no right to your command,
nor should they covet your inheritance.
People! Let your minds not slip[24] from you
and don't let heretical novelties take you to their fold!
A paternal uncle is more entitled than a paternal cousin,[25]
so listen to words of advice! The truth shall be listened to.

People were excited by the amatory introduction of the poem, to which the following verses belong:[26]

Youth has perished; it has escaped me, with its mischief.
Fickle Time and days are deceitful.
I could not live my youth fully to the utmost of its heedlessness[27]
before it came to an end. Now the world is a mere sequel.
[245] If you, woman, have not tasted the bereavement of youth,
nor been distressed with its torment, then my excuse will have no effect.

22 The words *aʾimmah* (pl. of *imām*) and *awṣiyāʾ* (pl. of *waṣiyy*) both have strong Shi'ite connotations, even though they can also be interpreted more generally.

23 A camel metaphor for the Caliphate. ʿAdī ibn Kaʿb and Taym ibn Murrah ibn Kaʿb are subdivisions of Quraysh. Abū Bakr belonged to Taym, ʿUmar belonged to ʿAdī, and Umayyah is the eponymous ancestor of the Umayyads (to whom, strictly, also ʿUthmān, the third caliph, belongs).

24 Reading, with Eghbal and Ibn Qutaybah, *lā taʿzub*; but *lā taghrub* (MS and Farrāj) is also possible.

25 Al-ʿAbbās ibn ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib, eponymous ancestor of the Abbasids, was Muḥammad's paternal uncle; ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib ibn ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib was Muḥammad's paternal cousin. The poet suggests that the Abbasids have a better claim than the Shi'ite imams.

26 Vss. 2, 4, 6, 1 of the same poem; cf. al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, iii, 760–761 (Hārūn admires the verses); *Aghānī*, xiii, 145 (the same) and 151 (where Manṣūr al-Namarī is said to have taken the first of these three verses with two other verses from another poet called Manṣūr ibn Bujrah al-Namarī).

27 Instead of *ghirratihī* other sources have *ʿizzatihī* ("its power", or "its glory"). Ibn al-Muʿtazz quotes this verse in his *Badīʿ*, 13.

The poem opens with:

My sorrow and anxiety never end
when I think of youth that will not return.

It is transmitted that he entered into the presence of al-Rashīd one day and recited to him:[28]

Sons of Ḥasan, and say to the sons of Ḥusayn:
take care to do the right thing!
Keep yourselves far from deceitful wishes
and from dreams that make false promises!
You[29] have bestowed a favour on Yaḥyā ibn ʿAbd Allāh
and he was on the brink of death.[30]
If you requited[31] what his hand committed
you would go to him dealing him a back-breaking blow.
You have power over the necks of ʿAlī's descendants
and you have bestowed favours on them by no means slight!
And when they come to harm, even though
they have done wrong, your heart is burning.
Fine fellows they are, ʿAlī's descendants,
and there is much falsehood in what they say![32]
They call the Prophet "father",
but one line of writing of The Parties refutes this.

28 They are vss. 18–19, 7, 9, 6, 24, 14–15 of a poem of 24 verses, see Manṣūr al-Namarī, *Shiʿr*, 85–88; Ibn al-Muʿtazz, *Badīʿ*, 18 quotes vss. 7–8, 12 of the poem; *Aghānī*, xiii, 144 quotes vss. 18, 20–24; al-Murtaḍā, *Amālī*, ii, 274–275 quotes vss. 1–6, 13, 7–11, 24; al-Shayzarī, *Jamharah*, 37 quotes vss. 18–19. 7, 9–10, 14–15 plus four vss. not in the collected verse.

29 Here and in what follows the poet uses 2nd-ps. singular, addressing al-Rashīd (the very erratic order of the verses does not help to clarify the interpretation).

30 Yaḥyā ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Ḥasan ibn al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī (d. c. 187/803), leader of an ʿAlid revolt in Daylam in 175/792; he surrendered having been promised pardon, but al-Rashīd remained suspicious and Yaḥyā died in prison. See *EI2*, xi, 242–243, "Yaḥyā b. ʿAbd Allah" (W. Madelung).

31 Reading, with al-ʿAshshāsh's edition, *kāfaʾta* instead of *jārayta* as in the MS (Farraj's text omits the letter *r*).

32 *Li-llāhi darru* with following genitive is usually an expression of admiration, but it is also used ironically (cf. Manṣūr al-Namarī's verse *Li-llāhi darru ʿidātikum | kayfa ntasabna ilā l-ghurūrī*, Manṣūr al-Namarī, *Shiʿr*, 85).

{115} He refers to God's words, *"Muḥammad is not the father of any of your men; rather, he is God's Messenger."*[33] When al-Rashīd heard his verse "And when they come to harm, even though they have done wrong, your heart is burning", he said, "Damn you! What's that? There was something I kept to myself for twenty years that I could not express openly, and now you have expressed it with that verse!" Then he said to al-Faḍl ibn al-Rabīʿ, "Take al-Namarī's hand, lead him into the treasury, and let him take whatever he wants!" So he made me enter.[34] The treasury contained only twenty-seven purses, which I took.[35]

On two occasions al-Namarī received for his poems more than any other
[246] poet ever got. This was the first ‖ and the other time happened when al-Rashīd was in al-Raqqah, a place he liked and found pleasant, so he would stay there. Once he stayed for a long period. Zubaydah said to the poets, "If someone describes Baghdad,[36] saying how pleasant it is, and thus making the Commander of the Believers long for it, I'll make him rich!" Several of them composed poems, among them al-Namarī, with verses beginning:[37]

> What is there in Baghdad, all these kinds of pleasantness![38]
> Marvels for worldly and religious matters,
> When the east wind blows in the deep-dark night
> and makes the twigs of fragrant plants rub together.[39]

Of all the poems they composed it was his poem that made an impression, and al-Rashīd went down to Baghdad. Zubaydah gave al-Namarī a jewel. She

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33 Q al-Aḥzāb ("The Parties") 33:40.

34 Suddenly the story turns into a narrative told in the 1st-ps. singular (the same happens below, p. 374).

35 As mentioned above, a purse (*badrah*) contains 10,000 (sometimes 1000) dirhams; the reward (270,000 dirhams) seems excessive. In the version of *Aghānī* it is 30,000 dirhams.

36 She calls it by its official name, Madīnat al-Salām, "City of Peace". Scheiner & Toral, the editors of *Baghdād* (1 n.1) berate modern scholars for equating Baghdad and Madīnat al-Salām, the latter strictly being al-Manṣūr's original "round city". But premodern sources generally ignore the distinction, see e.g. al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī's *Tārīkh Madīnat al-Salām*, or Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-buldān*: "Madīnat al-Salām, i.e. Baghdād".

37 They are vss. 1 and 3 of a poem of eight vss., see Manṣūr al-Namarī, *Shiʿr*, 140–141; Ibn al-Muʿtazz, *Badīʿ*, 18 quotes vs. 3. The poem is attributed to ʿUmārah ibn ʿAqīl (on whom see below, § 67) in Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-Buldān*, s.v. "Baghdād".

38 Reading, with Farrāj, *Mā dhā bi-Baghdāda min ṭībin afānīnī* (as in Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāyah*, x, 103) instead of *Man dhā bi-Baghdāda min ṭīnin afānīnī* as in the MS.

39 Reading, with the MS, *jarrashat*; but Farrāj's reading *ḥarrashat* ("set up against each other") is also possible.

arranged for someone to approach him and buy it from him for three hundred thousand dirhams.

Fine verses by him on the family of the Messenger (peace be upon him) are the following:[40]

The Messenger's kin and those who love them
are lying low for fear of being killed;
Jews and Christians are safe, but they
live in dread of the community of believers in one God!

The poem with rhyme letter M is used as a song text. It is a fine poem in praise of al-Rashīd, that begins:[41]

You two who visit us from your tents,
may God let you live in peace!
You have not come to see me at a time when I have
energy for permitted or forbidden things.
Ah, gone are amusement, childish love,
pretty girls, and wine!
My ignorance has ceased, my self-restraint has returned,
and grey hair has curbed my viciousness.
How good[42] were my beloved and my beloved's female friend,
that night when my desire worn them out!
They urged me to stay away for a long time
and they abandoned me, with the pasturing herd.[43]
They hid their reproaches of me;
but grey hair is worse than reproach.

40 Manṣūr al-Namarī, *Shiʿr*, 119; Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 860 (where al-Rashīd, having heard the verses after the poet's death, says, "I had a mind to exhume his corpse and burn it"; cf. above, p. 351).

41 Manṣūr al-Namarī, *Shiʿr*, 135–137 (vss. 1, 3–5, 7–10, 12–14 of a poem of 16 vss., found in Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 861); *Aghānī*, xiii, 13 quotes vss. 1–2, 10–11 of this poem as the lyrics of a song by ʿAbd Allāh ibn Ṭāhir (who is more famous as general, governor, and man of letters, but who was also a poet and a musician).

42 *Li-llāhi*, usually with the sense of admiration, seems to have an ironical flavour here (cf. *li-llāhi darr*, above).

43 Following the MS and Farrāj in reading *wa-ʿaddatānī*, rather than *wa-ʿazzabānī* (Ibn Qutaybah), which does fit the following *maʿa l-sawāmī* but is syntactically awkward, where a feminine form would be expected.

[247] Blessed be Hārūn, the Imam,
who holds fast to obeying God!
He conducts the affairs of a community
that wishes it could protect him from death:
If they could, they would give him
their shares of life-times.
O best of those who have gone and best of those who remain,
after the prophets, among mankind!

His poem with rhyme letter M on al-Maʾmūn when he was heir apparent is wonderful; it has become proverbial among all people. This is its opening verse:[44]

Perhaps she has a good excuse though you blame her.
There are many who blame who are themselves to blame.

{116} Al-Namarī composed many fine poems on the family of the Prophet (peace be upon them), which are among the best panegyrics on them. His other praise poems and love poems are also all of them fine. He is one of the master poets among the moderns. There are many reports and anecdotes about him.

44 Manṣūr al-Namarī, *Shiʿr*, 132 (3 vss., as in Ibn Dāwūd, *Zahrah*, 216, attributed to Manṣūr); al-Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥayawān*, i, 23 (anonymously); idem, *Bayān*, ii, 363 (attributed to "*ākhar, Muslim ibn al-Walīd*", the name apparently added by a copyist; the verse is found in Muslim ibn al-Walīd, *Dīwān*, 340); Ibn Wakīʿ, *Munṣif*, 202; al-Thaʿālibī, *Tamthīl*, 83. The first hemistich is quoted anonymously in al-Jāḥiẓ, *Bukhalāʾ*, 187; al-Bayhaqī, *Maḥāsin*, 502; al-Rāghib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ii, 12. Several sources have *lahū* ("he has") instead of *lahā* ("she has").

40 al-Baṭīn[1]

Abū l-Rayḥān told me: Sulaymān ibn ʿAlī said to me: Al-Baṭīn was twelve spans tall, reckoning with the longest span that is used by people.[2] No one was ever seen in his time who was taller than he; he frightened everyone who saw him. He had, moreover, an ugly face, so that anyone who met him did not doubt that he was a devil, until one came to converse with him, only to find that he was a most civilised and eloquent person. He was, however, licentious, and openly so. Despite his erudition and eloquence he was the stupidest of God's creatures. [The proverb says, "You will never fail to find that a tall man has either an ulcered foot or a disordered mind."[3]] Abū ʿAdnān told us: ʿAbd al-Ṣamad ibn Ibrāhīm al-Khazarī told us: ‖ Al-Baṭīn fell in love with a Jewish [248] girl from al-Ramlah[4] and wanted to marry her. Her family refused to give her in marriage because he was a Muslim. When he learned the reason for their refusal he converted to Judaism. He remained Jewish for a few years until he married her, and then he reverted to Islam. Abū Khālid al-Ghanawī said on al-Baṭīn:[5]

1 Abū l-Walīd al-Baṭīn ibn Umayyah al-Bajalī (of the tribe of Bajīlah) was a poet from Ḥimṣ (Homs) who has entries in Ibn al-Jarrāḥ, *Waraqah*, 10–12 and Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh*, lxviii, 54. He is listed in Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, i, 518; see also GAS, ii, 477. There are short references to him in other books such as Ibn Abī Ṭāhir, *Baghdād*, 109, al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, III, ii, 1090–1091, and Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, entry "Dayr Mīmās". Yāqūt mentions that the poet was brought to that monastery, between Homs and Damascus, when he was ill. Inadvertently urinating on a martyr's tomb there (presumably that of St Mamas), he died soon after, upon which the people of Homs intended to destroy the monastery, claiming that a Christian martyr had killed a Muslim. The Christians offered money to the governor and he prevented the destruction. But other sources (Ibn al-Jarrāḥ, *Waraqah*, 12; Ibn Abī Ṭāhir, *Baghdād*, 110; al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, III, ii, 1091; Ibn ʿAsākir) relate that he died when he fell with his mount into a well in Alexandria in 201/816–817. Al-Baṭīn means "the fat one", which sounds like a nickname (cf. his physique as described below), and Ibn ʿAsākir considers it so explicitly. In several sources (Ibn Abī Ṭāhir, *Baghdād*; Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh*; Yāqūt, *Muʿjam*; GAS; Bosworth, "The Tahirids and Arabic Culture", 60–61) the name is vowelled as al-Buṭayn ("Little Belly"), which, if correct, may be compared with Little John, Robin Hood's companion (who according to tradition was seven foot tall).

2 A *shibr* is the span of a hand, from the extremity of the thumb to that of the little finger. It is often used in indicating a person's height, but it is not mentioned in Hinz, *Measures*. If one assumes it is 20 cm or 8 inches, al-Baṭīn's height is 2.4 m, or 7 ft 10. "Al-Baṭīn was bigger than an elephant" according to Abū Hiffān (Ibn al-Jarrāḥ, *Waraqah*, 10).

3 This sentence is taken from the *Mukhtaṣar* (ed. Farrāj, Appendix, 438). The strange proverb has not been found elsewhere.

4 A town in Palestine.

5 Abū Khālid al-Ghanawī is listed in al-Marzubānī, *Muʿjam*, 509 but nothing else is known

A cunt that brought forth al-Baṭīn with a groan
without being split at the sides must have been wide indeed.
A time that made poetry speak like he does
and counted him among our number is surely marvellous.
When resurrected on Judgement Day his tongue
will falter, but his backside will be eloquent.

We were told on the authority of al-Khaṣībī,[6] who said: al-Baṭīn, who came from Homs, said to me: "When Abū Nuwās left Iraq, intending to go to Egypt to visit al-Khaṣīb, we heard that he would come past us on his way, so I kept expecting his arrival in Homs, until it was said, 'He has arrived!' So I went to the caravanserai[7] and there I found a man with an imposing appearance dressed in a loincloth dyed with safflower, sitting on a doorstep at the inn. He was holding one loaf of bread in his hand, crumbling it and throwing the crumbs to the birds. I greeted him and asked, 'Where are Abū Nuwās's lodgings?' He replied, 'Damn you, don't you see the sin of unbelief, so that you would not have to ask?'[8] So I took him home with me and he stayed at my place for some days, after which I escorted him for several miles."

He composed fine, well-made poetry, in a Bedouin style. He composed these verses:[9]

On a day of awful fighting I never said,
"Would that I lived in comfort and ease!"
Rather, I put on a protective coat of mail
on one who is to die but whose heart has not died.[10]

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about him. The following epigram is quoted in Ibn al-Jarrāḥ, *Waraqah*, 10; vs. 3 is quoted anonymously in Ibn Qutaybah, *ʿUyūn*, iv, 96 (with *ayr*, "prick", instead of *dubr*, "backside").

6 See Ibn al-Jarrāḥ, *Waraqah*, 11, Wagner, *Abū Nuwās*, 73–74 (where the poet is incorrectly called "al-Baṭīn Saʿīd b. al-Walīd").

7 The MS and the editions have *ḥān*, "tavern", but Ibn al-Jarrāḥ has *khān*, ("inn, hostelry, caravanserai"), which Farrāj considers more fitting here, and which I have adopted, but "tavern" is certainly possible in stories about Abū Nuwās.

8 Interpretation of *a-lā naẓarta ilā-maẓlimat al-kufr* uncertain; in *Waraqah* it is *a-lā naẓarta ilayya bi-ẓulmat al-kufr*. The stranger is in fact Abū Nuwās himself. In the version of *al-Waraqah* al-Baṭīn has brought with him a son with a pretty face; when the stranger demands a kiss from the boy, he is recognised as Abū Nuwās.

9 Vss. 3–4, 11 are in al-Khālidiyyān, *Ashbāh*, i, 189 (attributed to al-Baṭīn al-Miṣrī, an error for al-Ḥimṣī).

10 Alternatively, "on one who, in his heart, is (already) dead (i.e., resigned to being killed) but who has not died".

And I took a sword that accepts no rust, [249]
Like a shooting star, swooping down,[11]
Its stroke joined with death,
as poison is joined with a sting.
It is a refuge such as one loves,
silent, as long as he is not roused, deadly.[12]
Abū l-ʿAbbās![13] There is no one
who outstrips the onslaughts of separation.[14]
My soul has been afflicted[15] by one coming from you,
that has not been overtaken nor has passed.
Heeding the covenant consists of its bonds being
connected the strong bonds of affection,[16]
Protect me from letting it go to waste,
for that would be a loss.
My gratitude to you[17] is always linked {117}
to my tongue and lips.
Whenever I face a difficulty
you are the one who listens to me, the one to whom I turn.

He also said:[18]

Leave me with Kalb; today I am joined with them,
just as they are joined with me in every calamity.[19]
No, I do not mind the reproach of those who reproach,
shaking their heads at me, as long as Kalb are pleased.

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11 Reading, with Farrāj, *al-kufatī* (as in *Ashbāh*) for *al-f.ṭ.tī* as in the MS.

12 It is not clear to me whether this still refers to the sword or to Abū l-ʿAbbās in the next verse. The last word of the verse, *ḥafit* (as in the MS) is glossed by Farrāj as *muhlik* ("destroying, deadly"); Eghbal reads it as *khafit* ("silent, speechless").

13 He may be ʿAbd Allāh ibn Ṭāhir; see al-Baṭīn's verses on him in Ibn Abī Ṭāhir, *Baghdād*, 109–110.

14 I do not understand *jamjamāt al-bayn* and adopt Farrāj's suggestion of reading *hajamāt al-bayn*.

15 The text has *munniyat* ("has been granted") but I read *muniyat*, assuming that the subject is one of the preceding "onslaughts of separation".

16 *Riʿyatu l-ʿahdi llatī wuṣilat | bi-quwāhā quwwatu l-miqatī*; taking the relative clause to be the predicate (following the suggestion by Nefeli Papoutsakis, personal communicaton).

17 Reading, with Farrāj, *shukrīka* instead of the unmetrical *shukrī* in the MS.

18 Ibn al-Jarrāḥ, *Waraqah*, 10.

19 Kalb ibn Wabarah was an important tribe. Al-Baṭīn's own tribe Bajīlah is not related to them; perhaps the minor tribe Kalb ibn ʿAmr, a branch of Bajīlah, is meant.

Admired are the following verses by him:[20]

How wonderful, a heart that rises with loving you,
and does not stop rising in its ascent!
[250] It has placed love in its right place
and never strove to think no more of it.
I loved my heart when it loved you
and I follow it in everything.

This is an original motif such as a poet is only rarely gifted. In the same poem he says:

I went along with my heart wherever it wanted to go,
a follower in passion and one that is followed.
There is many a heart to which its owner says,
"Wretched heart of mine! It has done bad things!"
You, of whose sympathy I have been denuded,
though my sympathy has clothed him with robes of honour:
Whenever the wind blows from your land
I fall to pieces, longing for you;
And whenever it sets off from our town
I wish we travelled together.

Admired are also the following verses by him; these, too, have a Bedouin ring:[21]

We shot five and they shot Nuʿaym;
death becomes a brave young man.

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20 Vss. 3 and 5 are, anonymously, in Ibn Dāwūd, *Zahrah*, 69 and Ibn Faḍl Allāh, *Masālik* (ed. al-Jubūrī), vi, 322.

21 The attribution to al-Baṭīn is apparently incorrect. In *Aghānī*, xiv, 8 vss. 1, 4–5 are attributed to al-Ḥusayn ibn al-Ḥumām (a contemporary of the Prophet), on the death of Nuʿaym ibn al-Ḥārith ibn ʿUbād in a pre-Islamic tribal fight. The second hemistich of vs. 1 (with *al-qatl*, "being killed" instead of *al-mawt*, "death") and the second hemistich of vs. 2 are found in a poem by the pre-Islamic ʿAbd al-Shāriq ibn ʿAbd al-ʿUzzā, a poem known as one of the *Munṣifāt* ("the fair [poems]", which give the enemy their due), see al-Khālidiyyān, *Ashbāh*, i, 152–153; Abū Tammām's *Ḥamāsah* (al-Marzūqī, *Sharḥ*, 442–450); Ibn Ṭabāṭabā, *ʿIyār*, 101–103, a poem that contains other parallels ("… I killed five three men of them … and they shot Juwayn …"). Vs. 2 combines vss. 9a and 8b of ʿAbd al-Shāriq's poem. I have not found vs. 3 elsewhere.

When we had not omitted to stab with lances and throw spears,[22]
we lay down on our chests and shot arrows at each other.
If only you had seen the sons of our father,
their strength and how they[23] turned back against us!
Ah, the women were lamenting Nuʿaym!
Grievous was his loss to us.
May you not go far, Nuʿaym![24] But every living being
will meet death from Time's dealings.

22 The text has *nadban wa-rumḥan*. Farrāj glosses *nadb* as "energetic, lively (horse)" but suggests reading *nadsan* as an alternative, which I have adopted, reading *nadsan wa-ramḥan*. ʿAbd al-Shāriq's poem has *sahman wa-rumḥan* ("with arrow and spear").

23 Presumably the opponents are meant.

24 An ancient formula in elegy and lament.

41 Ashjaʿ al-Sulamī[1]

Abū ʿAlī al-Ḥusayn ibn Bisṭām told me: Abū Tammām al-Ṭāʾī said:[2] Ashjaʿ had a disagreeable appearance and an ugly face; he was struck by the evil eye. Al-Rashīd found his company among the poets hard to bear. One day Ashjaʿ
[251] entered into his presence. "Commander of the Believers," he said, ‖ "Will you allow me to recite to you? For if I do not gain from you what I wish on this day, I shall never gain it!" The Caliph asked, "How is that?" "Because I have composed a panegyric poem on you that is better than I myself or any other will ever hope to make. So if I cannot move you today I shall deprive myself of seeing you until the end of time!" The Caliph said, "Let's have it then, we will listen!" Then Ashjaʿ recited his poem with rhyme letter M, in which he says:[3]

On your enemy, O cousin of Muḥammad, two things keep an eye:
the morning light and darkness.
When he wakes, you frighten him, and when he rests,
his dreams unsheathe your swords to him.

{118} When he had reached these two verses al-Rashīd was moved and was happy. "This is a fine panegyric and a sound motif, by God!" he said, "It is not like what my ears had to listen to today." A number of poets had recited to him that day.[4] Then he recited to the Caliph his poem with rhyme letter J, in which he says:[5]

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1 Abū l-Walīd Ashjaʿ ibn ʿAmr al-Sulamī (of the tribe of Sulaym), born in al-Yamāmah, active in Basra, al-Raqqah, and Baghdad, prolific poet of mostly panegyric poems on Hārūn al-Rashīd, the Barmakids, and others. He died towards the end of the 2nd/8th century. He has entries in Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 881–885; al-Ṣūlī, *Awrāq*, i. 74–136; *Aghānī*, xviii, 211–252; al-Marzubānī, *Muwashshaḥ*, 452; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, vii, 511–512; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh*, ix, 105–113; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, ix, 265–267. See *GAS*, ii, 514–515; *EAL*, 109 (P.F. Kennedy); *EI2*, i, 697, "(al-)Ashdja‘ b. ʿAmr al-Sulamī" (Ch. Pellat); *EI3* (Reinhard Weipert). His poetry has been collected by Khalīl Bunyān al-Ḥassūn in his *Ashjaʿ al-Sulamī*.

2 Abū Tammām has an entry below, § 51.

3 The opening verses of the poem are quoted below. For verses of the poem see al-Mubarrad, *Kāmil*, ii, 127; Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 882; Thaʿlab, *Majālis*, 379–380; al-Ṣūlī, *Awrāq*, i, 76–77, 112; *Aghānī*, xviii, 233; al-ʿAskarī, *Dīwān al-maʿānī*, i, 145; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh*, ix, 105, 107; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, ix, 266–267; and many other sources.

4 Among them were Ibn Razīn al-Ḥarrānī (or al-Khurāsānī), Abū Aḥmad al-Taymī, and Aḥmad ibn Sayyār al-Jurjānī. The last-mentioned relates that Ashjaʿ recited his poem in al-Raqqah after some people had been beheaded, so that he and his fellow poets had to wade through blood to reach the Caliph (Thaʿlab, *Majālis*, 379; *Aghānī*, xviii, 214, Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh*, ix, 107–108).

5 Al-Ṣūlī, *Awrāq*, i, 94 (with three more verses), said to be addressed not to al-Rashīd but to al-Amīn, as also *Aghānī*, xviii, 226 (where al-Amīn is said to have been aged four at the time). See

A king whose father and mother are from one stock,[6]
from which came the blazing lamp of the community;
In Mecca, on the highest parts of its plain, both drank
the water of prophethood, unmixed.

When the Caliph heard these two verses he was almost beside himself with joy. "Ashjaʿ," he said, "When you came in you were the most insufferable man to me, and now you will leave me being my best-loved man!" Ashjaʿ asked, "And what will this status earn me?" "Riches!" said the Caliph, "Ask what you want!" "One million dirhams!" replied the poet. "Give it to him!" said the Caliph.[7]

Admired are the following verses on al-Rashīd:[8]

Greetings and peace to a castle
on which the Days have spread their beauty!
In it, the Caliph unveils the world, and in it
well-being and continuity for the realm meet.
They were ancient, memorable hidden treasures,
now unearthed by a king, resolved in his views.
Who will help me[9] against the days and nights that befall me,
while each year's neck is pushed on by another year?
You have been brought near the Prophet's shade by a link[10] [252]
and kinship with entangled strands of relationship.
Your hands reached for the sword on the day
the hands of other men were idle and feet slipped.

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also the following note. Vs. 2 is attributed to Salm al-Khāsir in al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, x, 199 and Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, i, 351, as part of a poem on al-Mahdī; both verses are attributed to Abū l-Hawl al-Ḥimyarī, addressing al-Amīn, in al-ʿAskarī, *Awāʾil*, 136; Ibn Shākir, *Fawāt*, iv, 47; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, v, 139; and to Abū l-Ghūl in al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, iv, 270.

6 Hārūn al-Rashīd's mother Khayzurān bint ʿAṭāʾ was in fact a freed slave (*umm walad*), which means that the addressee was probably al-Amīn, whose mother Zubaydah was a granddaughter of al-Manṣūr.

7 The amount sounds more than usually hyperbolic; reading *alf* ("one thousand") instead of *alf alf* would make it more realistic.

8 They are from the poem with rhyme letter M, see above. The first verse is very often quoted in works on rhetoric and stylistics as an excellent opening, beginning with al-ʿAskarī, *Ṣināʿatayn*, 453 (and cf. 177).

9 As Farrāj remarks, *man lī* (or *liya*) *bi-l-ʿaṣrayni* is unmetrical and reading *man liyya* would be an unusual licence.

10 Instead of *wasīlah* all other sources have *waṣiyyah*, which here seems to mean "testamentary disposition".

It is an excellent poem, in which he also says, "On your enemy, O cousin of Muḥammad …" His best poetry is that on al-Rashīd and the Barmakids. Among his poetry on al-Rashīd is the following, composed when the Caliph had ridden in a procession such as people had never seen, making a splendid appearance, with the most perfect accoutrements and equipment and numerous commanders and soldiers:[11]

May you always unfold feast days and fold them up,
while the days bring them to you and double them!
May you be met by a new and brilliant world,
[its days strung among its nights,
A feast day and another feast day, and the days between them,][12]
connected for you: they shall not vanish, though you make them vanish.[13]
Let conquest congratulate you, while the days come
with victory and glory tied to their forelocks!

It is a long poem, and it is famous, so we restrict ourselves to mentioning it. Ashjaʿ composed an elegy on Muḥammad ibn Manṣūr ibn Ziyād, which begins:[14]

11 Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 884; al-Ṣūlī, *Awrāq*, i, 80–81 (8 vss.); *Aghānī*, xviii, 211 (two vss. as a song text), 246; al-ʿAskarī, *Dīwān al-maʿānī*, i, 92; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh*, ix, 109; Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, s.v "Hiraqlah". The poem was recited when al-Rashīd had returned, during Ramadan, from a campaign against Heraclea (modern Turkish Ereğli), apparently the one of 190/806 (al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, III, ii, 709–711).

12 The parenthesis, lacking in the MS, has been supplied by Farrāj from Ibn Qutaybah and al-Ṣūlī.

13 I am uncertain of the sense of *wa-tufnīhā*.

14 Muḥammad ibn Manṣūr ibn Ziyād was an administrator serving al-Rashīd and the Barmakids. He was in charge of the Department of Land Tax (*Dīwān al-kharāj*) according to Ibn al-Jarrāḥ, *Waraqah*, 98. For the poem see Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 883; al-Ṣūlī, *Awrāq*, i, 131–132 (11 vss.); Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, iii, 292–293 (17 vss., which do not include vss. 2, 4, 6 of Ibn al-Muʿtazz's selection). An even longer version, of 22 vss., is given in al-Daymartī (or al-Dīmartī) al-Iṣbahānī, *Tahdhīb sharḥ al-Ḥamāsah*, 147–148; and see al-Shantamarī, *Sharḥ al-Ḥamāsah*, ii, 14–15. Vss. 1 and 3 are attributed to Abū l-Shīṣ in al-Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān*, iii, 123. They are also, attributed to Ashjaʿ, in Abū Tammām's *Ḥamāsah*, as one of the relatively few "modern" pieces, see al-Marzūqī, *Sharḥ*, 939–940; al-Tibrīzī's redaction of the *Ḥamāsah* (*Sharḥ*, 596) adds vss. 5 and 7. For another piece by him, of 7 vss., see al-Marzūqī, *Sharḥ*, 856–860. On the erratic ways in which verses of this poem are quoted, see my *Beyond the Line*, 202, written before I was aware of the longer versions in *ʿIqd* and *Tahdhīb sharḥ al-Ḥamāsah*.

I announce, to Generosity, the death of the Man of Generosity,
whose like is not found among those whose death I announce.
I announce the death of a man whose bounties
were widespread among people white and black.
I announce the death of a man after whose death the earth
sucked what remains of water from the wood.[15]
I announce the death of a man who with his bounties
was victorious in lowlands and wastelands.[16]
Fate has made, with his demise, a breach
that cannot be closed again.
Both,[17] after rising so high,
are now gathered in the belly of a grave.
Now it is feared that liberality will stumble [253]
and that miserliness will assail generosity.

Ashjaʿ said on Ibn Ṣubayḥ:[18]

He sees and no matter is too obscure for him, {119}
the veils of the Unseen[19] being almost rent for him.

Fine is also his elegy on his brother:[20]

My friends, do not think what you expect is still far away,
for all that is coming is not far.
Don't you see that night envelops day,
or how the light of day enfolds the nights?
Those are the two young men who destroy: when the youth
of one day ends, another day returns to grow up.

15 Al-Marzūqī, *Sharḥ*, 940 explains: trees have withered, the earth has become dust-covered.
16 Thus in the MS (*yaẓfaru fī l-qīʿani wa-l-bīdī*), which sounds incongruous. Farrāj tacitly adopts the version of Ibn Qutaybah and al-Ṣūlī: *yamlaʾu mā bayna dhurā l-bīdī* ("filled all that lies between the heights of the wastelands").
17 Manṣūr and generosity.
18 Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 885. Ismāʿīl ibn Ṣubayḥ was a state secretary serving under Hārūn and al-Amīn (see al-Jahshiyārī, *Wuzarāʾ*, index; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, ix, 123–124).
19 *Al-ghayb* is what is invisible, occult, or "*only known to God*" (Q Yūnus 10:20).
20 Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 885; al-Ṣūlī, *Awrāq*, i, 133, where also another elegy (15 vss.) on this brother is quoted, 132–133; Ibn Dāwūd, *Zahrah*, 477. For verses in which Aḥmad mocks his brother Ashjaʿ see *Aghānī*, xviii, 237.

I can no longer take delight in life, because
I can see him seeing me[21] when I yield to pleasure …

[He took this from someone who said,

I am so embarrassed towards you that it seems
as if someone unseen watches me on your behalf.][22]

… On the day I parted from Aḥmad, my full brother, it was
as if my right hand had parted from my left hand.

It was Ashjaʿ who said:[23]

An old disease among mankind:
the foolish passion of one human for another.

21 Farrāj's text has *barāniyā*, an error for *yarāniyā*.

22 The parenthesis is taken from the *Mukhtaṣar* (ed. Farrāj, Appendix, 438). The verse is by Jamīl ibn Maʿmar (*Dīwān*, 30); see also al-Rāghib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ii, 32, together with the verse by Ashjaʿ.

23 Al-Thaʿālibī, *Tamthīl*, 84; al-Tawḥīdī, *Baṣāʾir*, i, 165 (said to have been recited by al-Maʾmūnī, without mentioning Ashjaʿ); al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyah*, iii, 87.

42 al-ʿAbbās ibn al-Aḥnaf[1]

Ibrāhīm ibn Muʿallā al-Baṣrī told me: Muḥammad ibn ʿĀmir al-Ḥanafī told me: al-ʿAbbās ibn al-Aḥnaf belonged to the Banū Ḥanīfah.[2] He was a refined poet, of much eloquence, and naturally gifted. He practised chivalry,[3] combined with discretion and chastity. He was, moreover, of noble character, of much grace, and generous, not holding back anything[4] or sparing anything he possessed. His *kunyah* was Abū l-Faḍl.

Jābir ibn ʿAmr al-Bāhilī told us: Ibn Abī l-ʿAlāʾ told me: ‖ al-ʿAbbās grew up in [254] Baghdad. He belonged to the Banū Ḥanīfah, as the following verse indicates:[5]

> But if you[6] kill me, you will not get away with my life
> from the valiant men of my tribe, of Ḥanīfah or ʿIjl![7]

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1 Abū l-Faḍl al-ʿAbbās ibn al-Aḥnaf (d. c. 192/807), active mostly in Baghdad, in the entourage of Hārūn al-Rashīd; a poet exclusively of love poetry (*ghazal*) in an accessible style, much of it about a woman he calls Fawz ("Triumph") or Ẓalūm ("Tyrant"), whose identity has been the subject of some speculation. There is relatively much secondary literature on him, partly because his work has been seen (controversially) as an early example of "courtly" poetry, to be compared to or even linked with mediaeval courtly poetry in western Europe. He has entries in Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 827–831; *Aghānī*, viii, 351–372, xvii, 66–74 (specifically about his relationship with Fawz); al-Marzubānī, *Muwashshaḥ*, 445–449; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, xiv, 8–14; Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, xii, 40–44; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, iii, 20–27; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xvi, 638–644; Ibn Faḍl Allāh, *Masālik* (ed. al-Jubūrī), xiv, 391–396. See *GAS*, 513–514; *EI2*, i, 9–10 (R. Blachère); *EI3* (Susanne Enderwitz); *EAL*, 2–3 (R. Jacobi); Enderwitz, *Liebe als Beruf*. His *Dīwān* has been edited by ʿĀtikah al-Khazrajī.

2 For his genealogy see Ibn al-Kalbī/Caskel, *Ǧamharat an-nasab*, Table 156 (shortened in *Aghānī*, viii, 352).

3 *Kāna yataʿāṭā l-futuwwah*; the same phrase with a different sense is used below, p 492. On the several senses of *futuwwah* see e.g. *EI2*, ii, 961–965 (Cl. Cahen). Here it seems to refer to the societies or fraternities of *fityān* ("young men") identical with or similar to the *ẓurafāʾ* ("the refined"), whose ideal behaviour is pictured in al-Washshāʾ, *al-Muwashshā*. The sources stress that al-ʿAbbās refrained from libertinism or lampooning, and that he, unusual for a court poet, did not compose panegyric poems. On the story al-ʿAbbās and the *fityān*, see the references below (note 24).

4 *Lā yulīqu*; Farrāj adds "[*dirhaman*]" because normally a direct object (*shayʾan*, *dirhaman*) follows.

5 Al-ʿAbbās ibn al-Aḥnaf, *Dīwān*, 209 (in a poem of 11 verses on Fawz); al-Mubarrad, *Rawḍah*, 176; Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 827; al-Marzubānī, *Muwashshaḥ*, 446; Ibn Rashīq, *ʿUmdah*, ii, 123.

6 Instead of *yaqtulūnī … yafūtū* (3rd ps.) as in the MS and the text, I prefer to read, with the other sources, *taqtulūnī … tafūtū* (2nd ps.); the poet addresses Fawz and her kin (or Fawz only, for the plural is often used when addressing or talking about one's beloved).

7 ʿIjl and Ḥanīfah are related tribes. This verse was criticised in the sources mentioned, because normally, in love poetry, the "death" of the lover is supposed to remain unavenged.

ʿAwn ibn Jaʿfar told me, on the authority of Muḥammad ibn Rawḥ, who said: Muslim ibn al-Walīd "Slain-by-the-Fair" and al-ʿAbbās ibn al-Aḥnaf lampooned each other because of something that had occurred between them. Muslim said in a lampoon on him:[8]

A pretender will not find pleasure from the Banū Ḥanīfah.
Leave Ḥanīfah alone and seek another lineage!
Go to some Bedouins,[9] and affiliation with them will give you pleasure:
I think your face resembles the Bedouins.

Abū Mālik told me on the authority of al-Ajlaḥ ibn Yazīd, who said: al-ʿAbbās ibn al-Aḥnaf was a poet of love poetry, with delicate verse, who was compared to ʿUmar ibn Abī Rabīʿah al-Makhzūmī, each in their own period.[10] He did not compose panegyric or invective poetry; all his poetry was on love and description.[11] He said,[12]

I complain to those who made me taste the love of them:
when they woke me up in passion, they went to sleep.
I shall surely leave this world while my love of them
is still inside me, with nobody knowing of it.
I have found an acquaintance[13] between myself and worry
that will not end until eternity comes to an end.

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8 Muslim ibn al-Walīd, *Dīwān*, 258 (followed by four vss.); Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 827; al-Ṣūlī, *Akhbār Abī Tammām* (ed. ʿAsākir et al.), 42, (ed. & tr. Gruendler), 46–47; *Aghānī*, xix, 57; al-Ḥuṣrī, *Zahr*, 1018; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, xiv, 9. Although the text mentions mutual lampooning (*tahājī*), according to *Aghānī* Muslim's poem was a reaction to al-ʿAbbās, who had said (in prose, drinking with friends) that "Slain-by-the-Fair" should rather be called "Slain-by-the-Ghoul".

9 I follow Gruendler in rendering *ʿArab* as "Bedouins" (which is more often *Aʿrāb*).

10 cf. above, p. 327; also Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 827.

11 *Waṣf*, "description", here means description of the beloved.

12 Al-ʿAbbās ibn al-Aḥnaf, *Dīwān*, 84–85 (vss. 1, 4–5 of a piece of six vss.); see Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 828; idem, *ʿUyūn*, iii, 78; *Aghānī*, viii, 365 (vs. 1, as a song text); Ibn Dāwūd, *Zahrah*, 91 (attributed to Bashshār ibn Burd); al-Washshāʾ, *Muwashshā*, 40 (attributed to Bashshār ibn Burd); Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, xii, 44; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, iii, 20; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xvi, 638.

13 The MS and the text have *alqaytu … maʿrakatan* ("I cast a battle"); but I follow the reading of the *Dīwān* (*alfaytu … maʿrifatan*); compare a verse by Abū Hilāl al-ʿAskarī: "It is as if there are bonds of kinship between me and worry" (*ka-anna baynī wa-bayna l-hammi arḥāmā*, al-ʿAskarī, *Dīwān al-maʿānī*, ii, 92).

Admired are the following verses by him:[14]

If you had reproached me, my hope of your good will
would have soothed my anguish, and I would visit you, unobserved.
But you were bored, and I was powerless. Rejection
by one who is bored is not like rejection from one who reproaches.
One who cuts off hope by being stingy does not harm
if she regales me with a false promise.

This motif resembles another poet's verses:[15] {120}

Kill me![16] Would you like to destroy
my life by your words, in your delusion?
I find that my love of you[17] grows every day; [255]
I find your injustice in love justice, so be unjust!

Among the original and singular verses by al-ʿAbbās, to the like of which no one gets close, are the following:[18]

Because of what I say I am deprived of you, though
other lovers get those they love by means of it!
It seems I have become a wick that is set up
to give light to people, while it burns!

He also said:[19]

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14 Al-ʿAbbās ibn al-Aḥnaf, *Dīwān*, 36 (with a fourth vs.); Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 828; idem, *ʿUyūn*, iii, 146 (vs. 3); Ibn Dāwūd, *Zahrah*, 206 (vss. 1–2); *Aghānī*, viii, 355 (vss. 1–2 as a song text), 357 (vs. 2).

15 Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān*, iv, 68; Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 828 (anonymously). The verses are also in al-ʿAbbās's *Dīwān*, 134–135 (with two more verses), even though it looks as if no other source ascribes them to him.

16 Instead of *amītīnī* most other sources have *amattīnī*, "You have killed me".

17 Reading *ḥubbīki* with the MS and the other sources instead of the unmetrical *ḥabībaki* of the editions by Farrāj and al-Ṭabbāʿ.

18 Al-ʿAbbās ibn al-Aḥnaf, *Dīwān*, 197 (preceded by two vss.); al-Mubarrad, *Kāmil*, ii, 438; Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 828; Ibn Abī ʿAwn, *Tashbīhāt*, 380; Ibn Dāwūd, *Zahrah*, 93; *Aghānī*, viii, 370–371; al-Marzubānī, *Muwashshaḥ*, 406–407; al-ʿAskarī, *Dīwān al-maʿānī*, i, 263; al-Raffāʾ, *Muḥibb*, ii, 138; and many later sources.

19 Al-ʿAbbās ibn al-Aḥnaf, *Dīwān*, 145 (opening a poem of 15 vss.); Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 829; Ibn Abī Ṭāhir Ṭayfūr, *Baghdād*, 230 (anonymously); Ibn Dāwūd, *Zahrah*, 397 (attributed to al-Ḥusayn ibn al-Ḍaḥḥāk); *Aghānī*, xv, 253–254 (as song text).

Suppose I lower my eyes[20] when she appears,
and I restrain my gaze and don't look,
Then how can I hide when my tears
speak and reveal my secret thought?

Among his charming and original verses are these:[21]

She cried, not being used to crying,
finding strange the tears in her eyes.
Other women assisted her by crying too,
letting the tears be soaked up by their shirt-collars.
You, with whom I fell in love when I was young
—I became grey-haired, though it was not yet time to go grey—
You, who called me to be loved,
and I obeyed, responding when called!
So many stretched forth their hands
to be united with me[22] without gaining their share!
Upon my life, those who assert that hearts
concur with[23] other hearts are lying,
For if what they assert were true
no lover would complain about a beloved.
You, whenever you tread upon the earth
the earth turns to perfume for everyone.

It is told[24] that al-Rashīd once was estranged from his concubine Māridah, who was the mother of al-Muʿtaṣim.[25] He was nearly dying with his love of her,

20 Farrāj and al-Ṭabbāʿ have *aghuṣṣu* ("I choke"), as in the MS, but I read *aghuḍḍu* with all other sources.

21 Al-ʿAbbās ibn al-Aḥnaf, *Dīwān*, in two separate poems: 10 (vss. 5, 4, 3, 6, 7, 8, in a piece of 11 vss.), 51 (vss. 1–2, with two following vss.); Ibn Abī ʿAwn, *Tashbīhāt*, 83 (vs. 1); Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 828–829 (affirming that 1–2 and 3–8 are from the same poem); idem, *ʿUyūn*, i, 304 (vs. 8); al-Jurjānī, *Wasāṭah*, 228 (vs. 1); al-ʿAskarī, *Dīwān al-maʿānī*, i, 281 (vss. 6–7); al-Khālidiyyān, *Ashbāh*, ii, 299 (vs. 1); al-Rāghib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ii, 17 (vss. 6–7, anonymously), 31 (vs. 7).

22 I read, with Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr* and the *Dīwān*, *ilā waṣlinā* instead of *ilā ḥablinā*.

23 Instead of *tujārī* other sources have *tujāzī*, "requite, reward".

24 Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 831; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, i, 42–43; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xvi, 641–643; also at the end of a long story about the poet's involvement with a group of *fityān* in Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, vi, 382–386; al-Bayhaqī, *Maḥāsin*, 227–231 (for translations see Torrey, "The Story of El-ʿAbbās Ibn El-Aḥnaf", 60–66, from a later version in al-Ghuzūlī's *Maṭāliʿ al-budūr*, and Enderwitz, *Liebe als Beruf*, 37–42).

25 He reigned as caliph 218–227/833–842.

but he was too proud to be the first to be reconciled, and she, too, was too proud. Thus the two of them persisted, suffering most bitterly. It nearly destroyed al-Rashīd. Al-Faḍl ibn al-Rabīʿ, who was his vizier,[26] sent for ‖ al-ʿAbbās [256]
ibn al-Aḥnaf. He told him about the matter and said, "Compose something on this!" Then al-ʿAbbās said:[27]

Two people in love: each shunning the other,
each one reproachful, angry.
She avoids him, he avoids her,
yet each is wearied by what they suffer.
But if their mutual avoidance lasts too long,
indifference creeps in and what is desired is hard to get!

Al-Faḍl sent these verses to al-Rashīd, who was overjoyed. No sooner had he had finished reading them than al-ʿAbbās composed two more verses on the couple:[28]

A lover must sometimes stand
between reunion and severance;
But if avoidance continues for too long
he will return to the one he loves, despite himself.

Al-Rashīd admired how the poet had correctly hit on their situation. "I swear to God," he said, "I shall be reconciled to her, just as he said!" Māridah became aware that these verses had brought this about, but she did not know who had composed them. She asked al-Rashīd, who said, "I don't know who composed the verses, ‖ but al-Faḍl ibn al-Rabīʿ brought them." So she sent for al-Faḍl and {121}
asked him. He told her, and she gave orders that the poet be sent one thousand dinars. Al-Rashīd sent him two thousand dinars, and al-Faḍl sent him five hundred dinars.

26 In the long version (*ʿIqd*, *Maḥāsin*) it is the Barmakid vizier Yaḥyā ibn Khālid who acts as a mediator; elsewhere (*Aghānī*, *Wafayāt*) it is Yaḥyā's son Jaʿfar.

27 Al-ʿAbbās ibn al-Aḥnaf, *Dīwān*, 28 (4 vss.); Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 831 (vss. 2–3); Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, vi, 386 (4 vss.); Ibn Dāwūd, *Zahrah*, 107 (4 vss.); al-Bayhaqī, *Maḥāsin*, 229 (4 vss.); *Aghānī*, v, 241 (2 vss.); Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, i, 43 (1, 3); al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xvi, 642 (4 vss.).

28 Al-ʿAbbās ibn al-Aḥnaf, *Dīwān*, 251 (4 vss.); Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 831; Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, vi, 386; Ibn Dāwūd, *Zahrah*, 106; al-Bayhaqī, *Maḥāsin*, 230; *Aghānī*, vi, 295 (as a song text); Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, xii, 41–42; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xvi, 642.

One of his original descriptions is of a woman walking slowly:[29]

> When she walks among her female servants
> she seems to walk on eggs, or over bottles.

29 Al-ʿAbbās ibn al-Aḥnaf, *Dīwān*, 113 (vs. 6 of a poem on Fawz of 24 vss.); Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 829; Ibn Abī ʿAwn, *Tashbīhāt*, 102; al-Qālī, *Amālī*, i, 230.

43 Saʿīd ibn Wahb[1]

Ibn al-Bakhtakān told me on the authority of Abū Bakr ibn al-ʿAlāʾ al-Baṣrī, who said: Saʿīd ibn Wahb, the poet, was from Basra. He was a *mawlā* of Rabīʿah. Ibrāhīm ibn Maymūn told me: Aḥmad ibn ʿAbd al-Salām told me:[2] Al-Rashīd sent Masrūr[3] the older to Yaḥyā ibn Khālid ibn Barmak, al-Faḍl ibn Yaḥyā, and their kinsmen, when they were in prison, to find out about their situation. He went to them ‖ and found al-Faḍl ibn Yaḥyā, lying prostrate. He called out to [257]
him but al-Faḍl did not respond. When Masrūr came nearer he saw that al-Faḍl was sleeping and snoring. He went back to al-Rashīd and told him. The Caliph asked, "What was he wearing?" "He was wearing a tattered robe." It was winter and bitterly cold. The Caliph said to Masrūr, "Take this coverlet[4] and throw it over him without waking him!" This was done. The following day Saʿīd ibn Wahb, the poet, visited them. He had been on intimate terms with them in their days of glory and they had been good to him. He had looked after them during the days of their tribulations. Upon entering he asked, "What is this coverlet? I was with you yesterday and I did not see it then." They told him. "We must hope" said Saʿīd, "that this will lead to your being reconciled to the Caliph." He sat down with them and while he was talking to them someone came past in the street, hawking a young gazelle, going round the palaces. When al-Faḍl heard a gazelle being mentioned he fainted, looking as if he had died. They sprinkled some water on him, and rubbed his limbs for a while, until he came

1 Abū ʿUthmān Saʿīd ibn Wahb (d. 209/824), a *mawlā* of Persian descent, poet and state secretary (*kātib*) employed by the Barmakids, lived in Basra and Baghdad. As Ibn al-Nadīm says in his *Fihrist* (i, 382, 534), he does not belong to the famous family of state secretaries, the Banū Wahb (on whom see *EI*2, xi, 33–34, "Wahb, Banū" [C.E. Bosworth]). He composed mainly love poetry and he is said to have been fond of boys and wine, but he became pious, went on pilgrimage on foot, and died a penitent (*Aghānī*, xx, 336). He has entries in *Aghānī*, xx, 335–343; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, x, 105; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xv, 272–273. See *GAS*, ii, 516–517.

2 See al-Jahshiyārī, *Wuzarāʾ*, 246–248; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, xiv, 292–293. The story takes place after the dramatic fall of the Barmakids in 187/803, probably in Baghdad; but al-Faḍl was taken to al-Raqqah some time afterwards and remained imprisoned there until his death in 193/808.

3 Masrūr was a black eunuch, Hārūn's servant and executioner. Often called Masrūr al-Khādim ("the servant", but usually meaning "the eunuch"), he is here called al-Kabīr, "the older", to distinguish him from Masrūr al-Ṣaghīr ("the younger"), about whom little is known. He is mentioned in Ibn Sayyār al-Warrāq, *Ṭabīkh*, 76 (tr. Nasrallah, *Annals*, 174).

4 *Dawāj*, *duwāj*, or *duwwāj*, "blanket, coverlet, quilt", from Persian (al-Jawālīqī, *Muʿarrab*, 305). That such an object could be valuable is clear from Anon., *Book of Gifts*, 160 (a *duwāj* stuffed with pheasant feathers, embroidered with black silk), 220 (*duwāj*s costing more than 1,000 dinars). In al-Jahshiyārī's account of the present story the coverlet was made of sable fur (*sammūr*).

to. "What is the matter with you?" they asked. He said, "I heard that Gazelle[5] was mentioned"—meaning a concubine that he had loved, called Gazelle—"She was my joy in this world! I thought that she had been mentioned to al-Rashīd, and that he had harmed her! So I passed out." "No," they said, "it was only someone hawking a gazelle!" But he would not be reassured until he had called the gaoler and asked him. The man called the hawker, who came in together with the young gazelle. When al-Faḍl saw him with his own eyes he calmed down. He said to Saʿīd, "Is there anything among the stories and adventures about people that is similar to this?" Saʿīd replied, "Yes, Majnūn of the Banū ʿĀmir said this:[6]

Someone called in al-Khayf, at Minā
and stirred sorrows in my heart, unwittingly.
He called out the name of another Laylā, and it was as if
he made, with 'Laylā', a bird fly up in my breast."

"Well said, by God!" said al-Faḍl, "Well done! I swear this does resemble what
[258] happened to us. I swear to God, you must take ‖ this coverlet!" Saʿīd said,[7] So I said, "I swear to God, I shall not take it in this situation!" Al-Faḍl said, "By God, you shall take it, for if things end happily we shall have much of the same, and if our situation remains the same then you are more entitled to it. It is not something that changes our situation." I said to him, "Dear Sir! This is a thing kindly given to you by the Commander of the Believers! Surely the gaoler will not allow it to be taken away." Al-Faḍl called the gaoler and said, "I have given it to him, so do not forbid him to take it outside!" The gaoler said, "I will not stop
{122} him, but you should write ‖ to Masrūr the Servant and let him know."

So al-Faḍl wrote a note to Masrūr, who was much amazed. He told al-Rashīd what had happened. Al-Rashīd thought for a while; then he said, "I have not given it to him while objecting to anything he might do with it. So let him give it to whomsoever he wishes." When Saʿīd stood up to leave al-Faḍl, the latter said, "There is still something!" "What is it"? "You will be stopped and taken to al-Rashīd, and he will ask about the reason, asking 'Why has he given you that coverlet?' Now if you then mention Gazelle to him you will kill me!" Saʿīd

5 *Khishf*, "young gazelle", is used as a woman's name. See *Aghānī*, iv, 114 and xi, 353 for singers called Khishf.

6 On the legendary lover-poet Majnūn Laylā see above, p. 128. The verses are in his *Dīwān*, 122 and many other sources, such as Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 568, *Aghānī*, ii, 22. For al-Khayf and Minā see above, p. 314.

7 Suddenly (and only briefly) Saʿīd turns into the narrator of the story.

replied, "So what should I do?" Al-Faḍl said, "You must say that we were talking about some stories and charming anecdotes about you, and if he then asks you about these stories, you should say, 'The story was such-and-such, and he gave me the coverlet.'" Saʿīd said, "By God, I wouldn't know what story I could tell him!" "But you must!" said al-Faḍl, "Think about something that will be a sign for me, [so that when either one of us is asked about the reason he will tell his version and our two stories will not differ.]"[8] I said,[9] "I had a house with a small door opening on an alley, besides my customary door that opens on the street. That small door was entered only by beardless boys. The porter who looked after that door came to me one day and said, 'There is a young man with a beard who asks permission to enter the small door.' I said to him, 'Send him to the large door.' The porter left; [then he returned][10] and said, 'I told him, but he refused, claiming that he would enter only through this ‖ door, for that is [259] his custom.' So I stood up and looked through a crack in the door. And there I saw a friend of mine who had been away from town for some time and had returned sporting a beard! He had come to that door, as he was used to. Then I wrote:

Say to him who, in his ignorance, wanted to enter
through the door of naïve gazelles,
Having attached to his cheeks
a nosebag filled with barley:
Slip away, enter if you wish
through the main entrance!

[I sent the note to him. Having read it, he laughed and went to the main entrance, asking permission to enter, which I gave,][11] and he went in." [Al-Faḍl said, "Excellent, by God! You've told a funny story!"] He stood up and wrote the verses on the wall. "Now go," he said, "and may God keep you!"

When Saʿīd left he was stopped and taken to al-Rashīd. "When I entered into his presence," said Saʿīd, "they brought me into an audience chamber, with a curtain between him and me. I greeted him and he returned the greeting. Then he said, 'Saʿīd, what did you tell al-Faḍl so that he gave you that coverlet?' I

8 The parenthesis is added by Farrāj from al-Jahshiyārī's version.

9 Here Saʿīd is the narrator again. The story about the doors, including the following verses, is also found in *Aghānī*, xiv, 31, where the poet is Muḥammad ibn Yasīr al-Riyāshī (who has an entry below, §50).

10 The parenthesis (*thumma rajaʿa*) is added by Farrāj; the MS has *fa-nṣarafa*, "he went away".

11 This and the following parenthesis have been supplied from al-Jahshiyārī's version.

replied, 'If the Commander of the Believers wishes, let him exempt me! It was about something when I was young and ignorant.' But he said, 'You must!' 'Commander of the Believers,' I said, 'You are Caliph;[12] I cannot tell you such a thing without safeguarding. Will I be safe? Then I'll tell you.' The Caliph said, 'Tell me; you'll be safe.' So I told him the story (Saʿīd continued) and I recited the verses. He laughed and said, 'Servant, give Saʿīd thirty thousand dirhams!' Then he said, 'Go on with entertaining those men with your conversation and visit them often!' "

[260] Saʿīd was accused of a craving for being a passive sexual partner. He was a proficient poet. He used to spar in verse with Abū l-Ṣalt the poet, who composed the following verses on Saʿīd:[13]

Say to Faḍl: O son of those who rule
on earth, despite all who contend for it:
Ibn Wahb has a disease that is treated
by means of tawny, big-eyed gazelles.
He goes out in the morning to hunt them, but
he only takes the adolescent male gazelles.
He hawks the heads of the gazelles in public
but their extremities he hides in himself.[14]

{123} Admirable verses by Ibn Wahb are the following:[15]

On the day of the feast I was a slave
to the sons of her father's mother,
Madly in love, following them; or at least
I resembled a slave.
Upon God's life, that was not
because I loved her sons!
No, but it was because of a gazelle
who was a *mawlā* of her brother.

12 The text has *anta imām* (not in al-Jahshiyārī's version); it is not clear what is meant by this.

13 On Abū l-Ṣalt see above, p. 175. The verses are not found elsewhere. Faḍl, mentioned in vs. 1, is presumably al-Faḍl ibn Yaḥyā.

14 *Akāriʿ*, pl. of *kurāʿ*, means "shank" or "leg", especially of animals; sometimes a metaphor for "penis", see WKAS, *Kāf*, 131b. This verse resembles a verse by ʿInān (on her see below, §127), mocking her friend Abū Nuwās, see Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān*, i, 85; al-Iṣfahānī, *Imāʾ*, 39.

15 Not found elsewhere.

In his libertine verse he said:[16]

[What is the matter with you, gazelles of Wajrah,[17]
or what is the matter with you, human calves?
They disappeared, then returned, with on their cheeks
as if it were an eclipse of the moon.
They died without having been buried and taken to account,[18]
so in them is a lesson for the learner.]
Say to those who once were beardless, granting
their favours before the evil of hair appeared:
They are, after the delight that is now obliterated,
like travellers wearing their travelling turbans.[19]
And now, after the delight with them,
I avert, when they appear, my gaze from them.

He also said:[20]

May the Merciful bless you, my lord, in the morning
and the evening as long as you live!
I can bear all tribulations forever at all times
except your complaint.
Those I asked about how you were in the evening
and about your fever told me
Everything I love to hear, but they broke
my heart when they mentioned you.
There is no bliss in this world when I [261]
do not hear your pleasant private conversation.

Saʿīd was an expert poet. He composed panegyric poems for caliphs and viziers, and he was a man of virtue and status.

16 Vss. 1–3, bracketed here, are taken from the *Mukhtaṣar* (ed. Farrāj, Appendix, 438–439). Vss. 1, 3–4 are in Ibn Abī ʿAwn, *Tashbīhāt*, 294.

17 Gazelles or wild cows of Wajrah, a place said to be between Mecca and Basra (Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-buldān*), are often mentioned in poetry. The human calves are young boys, who are now sprouting beards, to the poet's regret.

18 A reference to the "Reckoning" at the Last Judgement.

19 It is not clear what is special about "travelling turbans" (*ʿamāʾim al-safar*); an *ʿimāmah* is normally white but may be black or green. Perhaps cheek-down and beard are likened to a travelling turban that covers the cheeks and chin.

20 Not found elsewhere.

44 al-ʿAttābī[1]

His proper name is Kulthūm ibn ʿAmr. He belongs to the Banū Taghlib and he is a descendant of ʿAmr ibn Kulthūm al-Taghlibī, the one who killed ʿAmr ibn Hind.[2] His teknonym is Abū ʿAmr; he was from Qinnasrīn. [Ibn Abī l-Khawṣāʾ told me:][3] My paternal uncle told me, saying: Abū l-Hudhayl[4] told me that al-ʿAttābī once addressed al-Maʾmūn, delivering a fine and concise speech. I asked him, "What was that speech, Abū l-Hudhayl? For if you thought it fine it must indeed have been fine." He answered, "Al-Maʾmūn said to him, 'ʿAttābī, speak!', upon which he said, "Commander of the Believers, one says Sh-sh! before Ps-Ps![5] A man will not be praised when he is right first thing, nor will he be blamed if he errs, because he is between two states: a speech that is well made and suffering from speaker's block. But he should be put at ease with geniality and then tested in a discussion." Al-Maʾmūn liked what he had said.

Ibrāhīm ibn ʿAmr al-Asadī al-Mawṣilī told me on the authority of Ibn Jābir the state secretary, who said: Al-ʿAttābī wrote to Abū Yūsuf al-Qāḍī:[6] "Fear God,

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1 Abū ʿAmr Kulthūm ibn ʿAmr al-ʿAttābī (d. c. 208/823), of the Banū ʿAttāb, a clan of the tribe of Taghlib, a poet from Qinnasrīn in Syria, active in Baghdad, attached to the Barmakids. He was also the author of epistles and several treatises. He has entries in Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 863; Yamūt ibn al-Muzarraʿ, *Amālī*, 51; *Aghānī*, xiii, 108–125; Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, i, 376–377; al-Marzubānī, *Muwashshaḥ*, 449–451; idem, *Muʿjam*, 244–245; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, xiv, 515–520; Ibn al-Abbār, *Iʿtāb*, 92–98; Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, xvii, 26–31; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, iv, 122–124; Ibn Shākir, *Fawāt*, iii, 219–221; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xxiv, 355–358. See *GAS*, ii, 540–541, viii, 159–160, xvi, 313, 410–420; *EI2*, i, 751, "al-ʿAttābī" (R. Blachère); *EI3*, "al-ʿAttābī" (Reinhard Weipert); *EAL*, 111 (C.E. Bosworth). His extant poetry and prose have been collected in Muḥammad ibn Saʿd ibn Ḥusayn, *Kulthūm ibn ʿAmr al-ʿAttābī*.

2 ʿAmr ibn Kulthūm is a famous pre-Islamic poet, tribal leader, and the author of one of the celebrated *Muʿallaqāt*. He is said to have killed ʿAmr ibn Hind, the tyrannical king of al-Ḥīrah, in the course of a war of Taghlib against him (c. AD 569); see e.g. *GAS*, ii, 128; *EI3*, "ʿAmr b. Kulthūm" (A. Jones).

3 The parenthesis, added by Farrāj, is taken from the *Mukhtaṣar*.

4 Abū l-Hudhayl al-ʿAllāf (d. 226/840–841) was an early Muʿtazilite theologian; on al-ʿAttābī's Muʿtazilite leanings see van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft*, iii, 32, 100–102. Versions of the encounter between al-ʿAttābī and al-Maʾmūn that differ considerably but include the proverb quoted are in Ibn Abī Ṭāhir, *Baghdād*, 217–218; al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, iv, 309; *Aghānī*, xiii, 111–112; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, xiv, 517–518; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, iv, 123; Ibn Shākir, *Fawāt*, iii, 220–221; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xxiv, 356–357.

5 A free translation of the proverb *al-īnās qabl al-ibsās*, literally, "Be friendly before you say *bs-bs*" (when milking a she-camel, to encourage the flow of milk). See al-ʿAskarī, *Jamharah*, i, 159–160, al-Maydānī, *Majmaʿ*, i, 95; also below, p. 459.

6 Abū Yūsuf Yaʿqūb ibn Ibrāhīm al-Anṣārī (d. 182/798), a prominent jurist, one of the founders of the Ḥanafī school of law.

who has blessed you with the recitation of His Book, and take care that your tongue will not be the tool of strife, nor your actions support ‖ for aggressors, [262] for the leaders of injustice deceive pious people by consorting with scholars."

Warqāʾ ibn Muḥammad al-ʿIjlī told me: Abū Ṣāʿid told me:[7] Al-ʿAttābī was a proficient and able poet of agreeable diction, and also a fine, accomplished writer of epistles, skills hardly ever combined in one person. When al-Maʾmūn sent for him and he entered into the Caliph's presence, al-Maʾmūn said, ["I heard that you had died, which grieved me; then][8] I heard that you had come to visit us, which gladdened me!" Al-ʿAttābī replied, "Commander of the Believers, if these words of yours could be divided among all people on earth, it would be sufficient for them. That is because there is no religion except through you, nor ‖ life in this world save with you." Al-Maʾmūn was pleased with his words {124} and said to him, "Ask me for something!" "Commander of the Believers," said al-ʿAttābī, "Your hand is freer with gifts than my tongue with asking!"

Jaʿfar al-Mālikī told me, saying, "I have never heard any theologian speaking any better than al-ʿAttābī when he speaks.[9] And I have never seen anybody engaged in both poetry and letter-writing without finding them producing feeble poetry, except him. He is a master poet and an excellent speaker."

Fine verses by him are the following:[10]

My repentance has returned to you my hope,
  and my gratitude has turned its reins to you;
And I have made your reproach the reproach of an admonition
  and the expectation of your forgiveness the extent of my apology.

Admirable are also these verses by him:[11]

7 In the *Mukhtaṣar* the names are Muḥammad ibn Warqāʾ and Ibn Abī Ṣāʿid. For the following, see Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 863; Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, ii, 100–101 (tr. Boullata, *Unique Necklace*, i, 284); *Aghānī*, xiii, 111; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, xiv, 518; Ibn al-Abbār, *Iʿtāb*, 98; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, iv, 124.

8 Parenthesis supplied by Farrāj from the parallel sources, to replace the garbled text of the MS.

9 The word *kalām*, repeatedly used here, normally means "speech", but here it is ambiguous since it is also a technical term for "speculative theology". When he is called "an excellent speaker" (*jayyid al-kalām*), *kalām* means "prose" as opposed to verse; but again it hints at the theological sense.

10 Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥayawān*, iii, 483 (with a preceding verse); Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 863; idem, *ʿUyūn*, i, 100–101; Ibn al-Abbār, *Iʿtāb*, 94.

11 Vs. 2 is quoted in al-Rāghib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ii, 356 attributed to al-ʿAttābī; in al-Baṣrī, *al-*

He avoided the abode of the woman of ʿĀmir: it would burden him[12]
with memories of the time of youthful love and full-breasted women,
Dwellings at which the eyes cannot look
without copiously flowing tears being drawn from them.
There is no reunion except by turning one's mount towards
a place with effaced road marks and obliterated playgrounds.

[263] Original are also these verses by him:[13]

What can possibly be said by one who praises you, since
sanctification and purification spoke to you in the Revelation?
You have transcended pangyrics; but our tongues
are made to utter what our hearts harbour.

Admirable are also these verses:[14]

What is it about the remains at Ḥuwwārīn[15] that sadden you,
and rubble laid bare by whirlwinds?
They saddened you so that even your inner heart participates,[16]
and the pupils of your eyes are overflowing.
May you, remains, be dressed in robes of blossom
and may you always be verdant, covered with flowers!

Ḥamāsah al-Baṣriyyah, ii, 214 it is found in a piece of four verses attributed to Abū Hiffān al-Mihzamī, the author of *Akhbār Abī Nuwās*.

12 Reading *tukallifuhū* instead of the unmetrical and syntactically incorrect *tukallifhu* as vowelled in the editions.

13 Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 863; idem, *ʿUyūn*, i, 94; Ibn Abī Ṭāhir, *Baghdād*, 110; Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, ii, 136; *Aghānī*, xiii, 109; al-Marzubānī, *Muʿjam*, 244; idem, *Muwashshaḥ*, 451. The verses are addressed to Hārūn al-Rashīd, who admired them; but Yaḥyā ibn ʿAlī al-Munajjim, quoted by al-Marzubānī (*Muwashshaḥ*, 451), condemned the diction of the second verse (one must concur partly: *ḍamāʾīr* is an awkward licence for *ḍamāʾir* for the sake of the rhyme).

14 *Aghānī*, xiii, 122 (vss. 1, 2, and three more verses), said to be part of a poem composed after a punitive action against tribal Arabs led by Abū ʿIṣmah (mentioned above, p. 351). It is possible that the two preceding verses, with the same metre and rhyme, belong to the same poem, but this is not stated.

15 Ḥuwwārīn is a place near Aleppo (and therefore near Qinnasrīn, al-ʿAttābī's birthplace), see Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, where Ḥuwwārayn is given as alternative vowelling and where an anonymous verse is quoted with identical metre and rhyme as in al-ʿAttābī's verses; it is attributed to him in al-Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥayawān*, ii, 296, v, 227–228.

16 Farrāj explains: "He talks to himself, like someone who is worried".

Admired are these verses:[17]

You know[18] a place where Sulaymā spent the summer, and a spring abode
at the height of Nammūd, and then at the flanks of Baltaʿ,[19]
Lands where wild beasts spend the winter and graze, feeding
on barley grass and tall, lush herbage;
Tawny gazelles pasture there, followed by young; you might think
it is a place where people have settled and gathered.

He also said:[20]

Nawār shunned him, so he shunned and avoided her;
she turned away and he loosened the bond with her.
And it was as if her image arrived
in his eyes from where it had gone.

He also said:[21]

Despair about Sulaymā shot an arrow at my heart,[22] hitting the mark;
the passionate love-thirst of the heart for her was … (?)[23]

It is a fine, well-known poem. Al-ʿAttābī's poems are all excellent, without a single inferior verse.

17 Not found elsewhere.

18 Instead of *ʿarifta* one could read *ʿariftu*, "I know"; but at the beginning of a *nasīb* (amatory prelude) poets often address themselves.

19 Nammūd and Baltaʿ are unknown places. Eghbal suggests reading the latter as *balqaʿ*, "wasteland", but this is not known as a specific placename, and cannot therefore have the genitive form *balqaʿā* as here.

20 Not found elsewhere.

21 Not found elsewhere.

22 I follow Farrāj's emendation (*ramā l-qalba ya'sun*) of the MS which has *raʿā l-qalbu nāsan*.

23 I do not understand *wa-kāna bihā huyyāmatu l-qalbi muhnadā* (this is Farraj's emendation of *muhtadā*; he suggests a connection with the verb *hannada*, said of a woman: "to infatuate, make a man fall in love").

[264] 45 Diʿbil ibn ʿAlī al-Khuzāʿī[1]

Abū l-ʿAbbās al-Mubarrad told me, saying, "I was coming down from Surra Man Raʾā.[2] When evening fell, I told the skipper to moor the boat at the riverbank, to
{125} spend the night. As the sun was setting we saw that ‖ a boat with an awning was nearing the riverbank. When it arrived at the bank a servant came out, carrying a pellet bow;[3] then another came out with a bag of pellets. After them an old man came out, of impressive appearance and with a radiant face. He was leaning on a servant. When I saw him I said to myself, no doubt this man is well-off. And it happens but rarely that a prosperous person is not well-educated,[4] so I followed him. Having taken the pellet bow, he aimed at a bird but missed. He shot again and missed again. He shot for a third time and missed yet again, He handed the bow to one of the servants and said,[5]

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1 Diʿbil ibn ʿAlī ibn Razīn, of the tribe of Khuzāʿah (d. 244/859 or 246/860 at an advanced age), poet from Kufa, active in Baghdad and elsewhere, known as a Shi'ite and famous especially for his satire and invective on various people including caliphs (he compared al-Muʿtaṣim, eighth Abbasid caliph, to a dog, quoting the Qur'an on the legendary Seven Sleepers [Q al-Kahf 18:22]: *Seven, and their dog the eighth of them*). Surprisingly he got away with much, but in the end he died, having been attacked with a poisoned stick in revenge for a lampoon. That Ibn al-Muʿtazz does not bother to mention this, or the poet's adventurous past, shows once more that he does not do biography. Diʿbil may have been a nickname ("old camel"), his proper name being Muḥammad according to a report in *Aghānī*, xx, 123 (different names are found in other sources). He was a precursor of Ibn al-Muʿtazz in compiling a book on poets, *Ṭabaqāt al-shuʿarāʾ*, fragments of which are quoted in several sources; they have been collected by Muḥammad Jābir al-Muʿaybid and before him by Leon Zolondek in his monograph *Diʿbil b. ʿAlī*. His poetry has been edited several times; I have used the *Dīwān* edited by ʿAbd al-Ṣāḥib ʿImrān al-Dujaylī. He has entries in Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 849–852; Yamūt ibn al-Muzarraʿ, *Amālī*, 48–50; *Aghānī*, xx, 119–186; al-Marzubānī, *Muwashshaḥ*, 458–459; idem, *Akhbār shuʿarāʾ al-Shīʿah*, 92–107; Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, i, 507; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, ix, 360–364; Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, xi, 99–112; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, ii, 266–270; al-Nashshābī, *Mudhākarah*, 88–99; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xiv, 12–17; Ibn Faḍl Allāh, *Masālik* (ed. al-Jubūrī), xiv, 450–455. See GAS, ii, 529–532, ix, 297, xvi, 191–192; EI2, i, 248–249 (L. Zolondek); EAL, 193 (G.J.H. van Gelder). His son al-Ḥusayn has an entry below, § 117.

2 Surra Man Raʾā ("Pleased are Those who See [Her]") was the official name of the town usually called Samarra (Sāmarrāʾ), c. 125 km north of Baghdad on the Tigris, which served as the capital of the empire and the residence of caliphs between 221/836 and 279/892. Al-Mubarrad was born c. 210/826 and Diʿbil in 148/765.

3 *Qaws bunduq*, a kind of bow equipped with a ruler with a furrow in the middle to guide a pellet or stone.

4 Translation uncertain and incomplete. The text, following the MS, has *qalla mā yakūnu min al-niʿmah illā adīb wa-immā waḥīd*, the sentence being incomplete and the sense of *waḥīd* here being incomprehensible, as Farrāj says.

5 A verse of *rajaz* metre, like the rhyming reply.

We shoot at birds but we miss them …

Then I said, extemporising (continued al-Mubarrad),

… shooting feebly, not harming them.

The old man said, 'Who is capping my verse?' I answered, 'Dear Sir, I am al-Mubarrad. And who are you?' 'I am Diʿbil', he replied. I hastened towards him to kiss his hand, and I kept conversing pleasantly with him until he entered Baghdad. When I was about to leave him to go to my own home he stopped me, saying, 'If you leave, who can I have a good time with?' I said, 'Dear Sir, I find it difficult to part with you, but now I must excuse myself. I'll come back another time and we'll have a pleasant time together.' So he let me go."

Al-Yazīdī told me: A man said to Ibn al-Zayyāt:[6] "Why don't you respond to Diʿbil and ‖ his poem in which he lampooned you?" He replied, "Diʿbil has [265]
hewn his own cross and put it on his shoulder; he has been going round seeking someone to crucify him on it for some thirty years without caring what he says or what is said to him."[7]

Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad told me: Diʿbil went to Khorasan when al-Maʾmūn was there and al-Riḍā (peace be upon him) was with him.[8] He composed panegyrics on both men, who rewarded him handsomely. He came past Qumm,[9] where he stayed with the Shiʾites there. Every year they would pay him fifty thousand dirhams. In Qumm there lived a man who also tried his hand at poetry, composing weak, risible stuff. When someone recited a specimen of it to Diʿbil, he said to the reciter, "Stop! Listening to this makes my ears rusty."

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6 Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Malik al-Zayyāt (d. 233/847), vizier under al-Muʿtaṣim and al-Wāthiq.

7 Farrāj's text has *fuʿilā lahū*, "(what) is done to him"; the MS does not have *qīla lahū*, as Farrāj says, but *y.q.l lahū*, which I suggest should be *yuqālu lahū*. In the *Mukhtaṣar* Ibn al-Zayyāt says, "… without finding anybody to do that to him. So should I come and lampoon him? Then I would err and not follow the right course." For invective verses by Diʿbil on Ibn al-Zayyāt see *Dīwān*, 205 (also *Aghānī*, xx, 139; but in Ibn Abī ʿAwn, *Tashbīhāt*, 346 they are said to be on al-Ḥasan ibn Wahb).

8 On the following see Gruendler, "Verse and Taxes", 114–117. ʿAlī ibn Mūsā ibn Jaʿfar, known as ʿAlī al-Riḍā, was the eighth imam of the Twelver Shiʾa. In 201/816 al-Maʾmūn appointed him as his heir, to the dismay of many of his entourage. The vizier who may have been behind the move, al-Faḍl ibn Sahl, was murdered in 202/818 and al-Riḍā died soon afterwards after a short illness, possibly poisoned. The Caliph's involvement in the deaths has been suspected but remains uncertain. Diʿbil's most important poem in praise of al-Riḍā and the Shiʾa is the long ode of which five verses are quoted below; on his financial gain from it see *Aghānī*, xx, 148–149, al-Marzubānī, *Akhbār*, 104–105.

9 Qumm (or Qum, Qom) a city in central Iran, was (and still is) a bastion of Shiʾism.

The man heard about this and went to Diʿbil, saying, "You are the one who has trashed my poetry, aren't you? Well, I have made some verses on you!" Diʿbil said, "Let's hear it!" The man said,[10]

In Diʿbil's arse there are afflictions
that cannot be cured in future.[11]
It can be cured only by
the prick of a mule in Kabul.

Diʿbil was taken aback. "By God," he said, "these verses by him are bound to spread because they will be easy[12] on the tongues of the common people and young children!" He said to the man, "If I give you something, will you suppress these verses and not make them public?" The man replied, "I want nothing better!" He was rather poor. Diʿbil said, "Give the man one hundred dirhams!" But he said, "I swear to God, I shall take only one thousand!" He took them and left. We said to Diʿbil, "What have you done? This man is normally paid one or two dirhams and he would have been happy with five from you!" He replied, "Enough of that! By God, if he had exacted the fifty thousand dirhams that I received in Qumm I would have paid it to him." Then Diʿbil left; but the verses became known in the region; they were loudly declaimed by the rabble, the
[266] lower classes, ‖ and the slaves. Diʿbil was forced to leave the town and after that he would never return to it.

A certain poet went to Diʿbil and said to him, "I have made a poem in praise of you." Diʿbil replied, "You know who I am, then?" "Yes," said the man, "you are Diʿbil." "In that case, [recite it!]"[13] Then the man recited,

{126} To someone who had said to me,
"The most generous man you can beg from is Diʿbil", I said,

10 Al-Rāghib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, i, 55.

11 Reading and translation uncertain. To scan correctly, the name "Diʿbil" has to lose its inflection (*fī sti Diʿbil balābil*). The second hemistich reads as *laysa y.sl.n li-qā'il* in the MS, which is incomprehensibe. Farrāj emends this to *laysa yashfā* (I read it as *yushfā*) *li-qābil*, as in *Muḥāḍarāt*. Gruendler translates the verse as "One rumors about the bottom of Diʿbil | that it is not sated by what is willing." Perhaps *li-qābil* means "for someone approaching (him/it)".

12 The MS has *shiʿruhū hādhā li-jīfah*, which Farrāj emends to *shiʿr hādhā l-jīfah* ("the verses of this carrion", cf. Gruendler: "the poetry of this stinking cadaver"), which looks unlikely not only because of the discord between the masculine demonstrative and the feminine noun but also on account of the unusual comparison. I follow Eghbal's much more plausible suggestion, reading *li-khiffatihī* instead of *li-jīfah*.

13 Missing word supplied by Farrāj.

"Can one beg from a beggar?"
He replied, "A beggar is not miserly;
He would think badly of himself[14]
if he begged from people but would not be begged from."

Diʿbil rewarded him generously.

Nice verses by Diʿbil are those on al-Maʾmūn, in *rajaz* metre; they are eloquent and simple:[15]

O Salmā with those brilliant and sweet teeth,
Woman with henna-dyed wrists,
And a quivering behind beneath her waistband,
And coal-black hair, like a raven!
By those sweet kisses,
After your accusation and reproach,
Lift today from me my woe!

Fine verses by him are these:[16]

A guest arriving in the dark is directed to a meal
by the glare of my fire or the barking of my dogs.[17]
Even when they confront him and come to meet him
they greet him, wagging their tails.
In recognition of their training in this, they would
almost welcome him in eloquent language.

On Abū Saʿd al-Makhzūmī he said:[18]

14 Following the edition, reading *la-biʾsa mā qaddara fī nafsihī*, as in the *Mukhtaṣar*, instead of the text of the MS (*laysa kamā qaddara fī nafsihī*).

15 *Diʿbil*, *Dīwān*, 120, followed by three more verses, but not extending to verses in praise of the Caliph, apparently not preserved.

16 *Diʿbil*, *Dīwān*, 324 (preceded by three verses). The verses are attributed to Ibn Harmah in Ibn al-Marzubān, *Tafḍīl al-kilāb*, 69, Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh*, vii, 69; al-Rāghib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, i, 405 (vss. 1–2); see also Ibn Harmah, *Shiʿr*, 70–71. As Farrāj notes, two verses by Ibn Harmah in *Aghānī*, v, 263 (and his *Dīwān*, 73) resemble vss. 1–2 of the present poem.

17 A contrast with al-Akhṭal's much admired mockery of a stingy tribe: "People who, when guests make their dog bark, | say to their mother: Piss on the fire!" (ps.-Abū Tammām, *Naqāʾiḍ Jarīr wa-l-Akhṭal*, 135).

18 Abū Saʿd al-Makhzūmī has an entry below (§ 56), with more lampoons by Diʿbil. The verses (in *rajaz* metre) are in the *Dīwān*, 301–302.

Abū Saʿd, in spite of his libertinism
And the slightness of his intelligence and religion,
[267] Is always kneeling, forehead to the ground,
For any snake that will creep into his bottle,[19]
And planting his neighbour's cucumber in his own fig.

Diʿbil said on hospitality to guests:[20]

Regale me again, you two, with music and wine,
and a guest visiting in the night who wants a meal!
The melodies sung by a guest are sweeter to us
than the bleating of sheep or the grunting of camels.[21]
We lodge a guest who alights with us
deep in our heart and bosom.
Many a guest who was a merchant have I caused a loss:
I sold him a meal and bought praise.[22]
I detest wealth when I have amassed it:
detesting wealth is part of loving higher things.
Life consists only of five things,
and how good they are, how good:
Serving a guest, a glass of delightful wine,
a drinking mate, a girl, and song.
If you miss one of these,
life diminishes, as one's passion diminishes.

He is the author of the poem with rhyme letter T on the family of the Messenger (God's blessings be on him and them), which opens with:[23]

19 The Arabic has *fī tisʿīnihī*, "into his 90", an image from dactylonomy, where the number ninety is indicated "by placing the tip of the forefinger on the base of the thumb" (*EI2*, iii, 466–468, "Ḥisāb al-ʿaḳd" [Ch. Pellat]). I chose to use rhyming slang ("bottle" standing for "bottle and glass", rhyming—in British English—with "arse"). Farrāj also explains the imagery of the next verse, which hardly seems necessary.

20 Diʿbil, *Dīwān*, 97–98; al-Rāghib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, i, 401 (vs. 2); al-Maʿarrī, *Ghufrān*, ii, 138–139 (vs. 1).

21 The text has the tautological *min rughā'i l-shā'i fī dhāti l-rughā* and I follow the version of the *Dīwān*: *min thughā'i l-shā'i aw dhāti l-rughā*.

22 "Sold" and "bought" are to be taken metaphorically: he gives a meal and receives praise in return, more valuable than food.

23 Diʿbil, *Dīwān*, 123–145 (115 vss. as e.g. in al-Marzubānī, *Akhbār*, 95–103). Verses of the poem are often quoted. In the *Dīwān* the verse quoted here is not the opening but vs. 30 of the

The schools of Qur'anic verses are empty of recitation;
deserted are the courts of the abode of revelation.[24]

The poem is as well-known as the sun, so there is no need for us to include it or even quote part of it. He is also the author of another poem with rhyme letter T, which begins:[25]

You were visited at night by desires; {127}
do not show fear, for it was you who began.[26]
Love of the family of the Chosen One and his Legatee[27]
leaves no time for delights or singing girls.
Declaiming one's love for the kin of Muḥammad
is more befitting and more profitable for me than acquisitions,
Therefore pack your poems with them, and empty [268]
for them a heart that you stuffed with the delights that it craved!
Sever the bond with those who love other people than they,
and you shall lodge in the Abode of Salvation!

This, too, is a long and famous poem, so we shall not quote more of it.

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poem. However, like Ibn al-Muʿtazz, al-Masʿūdī (*Murūj*, iv, 148) says that it is the opening verse. Al-Shayzarī (*Jamharah*, 118–120) and Yāqūt (*Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, xi, 103–110) begin their lengthy quotations of the poem also with this verse; Yāqūt adds that there are several copies of the poem containing added verses that are spurious in his view. See also e.g. the repeated quotation of the verse in *Aghānī* (xx, 142, 148, 181), also suggesting it was the original opening.

24 This untranslatable verse cleverly welds together religious terms with the diction of the ancient convention of opening a poem with a description of an abandoned site. Here, the sites are Mecca and the other abodes of the Prophet and his family, as the following verses, not quoted here, make clear. *Madāris* means "schools", but it could be interperted as "places of effacement", derived from the verb *darasa*, "to obliterate, efface" (cf. the expression *madrasat al-naʿam*, "camel track"). *Āyāt* means "Qur'anic verses" but also more generally "signs" such as may be effaced (cf. Imruʾ al-Qays, *Dīwān*, 89: *Qifā nabki min dhikrā wa-ʿirfānī | wa-rasmin ʿafat āyātuhū mundhu azmānī*). *Waḥy*, "(divine) revelation" also means "writing, inscription" (in Labīd's *Muʿallaqah* eroded stones are said to look as if containing writing, *khalaqan kamā ḍamina l-wuḥiyya silāmuhā*).

25 Diʿbil, *Dīwān*, 146–147; Ibn al-Muʿtazz says it is a long poem but no more verses are known.

26 The feminine verbs show that he addresses his soul, or himself.

27 The Chosen One (*al-Muṣṭafā*) is the Prophet Muḥammad, the Legatee (*al-Waṣiyy*) is ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib.

46 al-Ḥusayn ibn al-Ḍaḥḥāk al-Bāhilī[1]

Abū Manṣūr al-Khazarī told me: al-Nawfalī told me: Muḥammad ibn ʿAbbād al-Muhallabī said:[2] Al-Maʾmūn asked me, after I had arrived from Basra, "How was that wit of your town when you left him, and the one in the house of Abū ʿAlī, that Ḥakamī of yours?" (He meant Abū Nuwās). I said, "Who is it that the Commander of the Believers means?" "That man you know, al-Ḥusayn ibn al-Ḍaḥḥāk the poet. He said this verse:

> God saw that ʿAbd Allāh was the best of His servants,[3]
> so He made him reign. God knows best about a servant

didn't he?" Then he said, "Write to him, telling him to come here!" I answered, "He is ill and unable to travel." The Caliph said, "Then take the letter to our governor in Basra, together with a thousand dinars, to be given to him."[4]

Al-Ḥusayn ibn al-Ḍaḥḥāk said,[5] One winter's day when I was in the mosque in Basra, Abū Nuwās arrived, wearing a splendid robe of silk and wool,[6] of fine

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1 Abū ʿAlī al-Ḥusayn (also Ḥusayn without the article) ibn al-Ḍaḥḥāk al-Bāhilī, nicknamed al-Khalīʿ ("the Profligate"), a *mawlā* of the tribe of Bāhilah of Khorasani descent, was a poet from Basra, a contemporary of Abū Nuwās, with whom he grew up and whom he followed moving to Baghdad. He became a boon companion of al-Amīn and other caliphs (but not al-Maʾmūn, who resented the poet's attachment to al-Amīn), composing mostly amatory and Bacchic poetry (some of which is said to have been stolen by, or falsely attributed to, Abū Nuwās, whose fame eclipsed his). He died at an advanced age in 250/864. He has a long entry in *Aghānī*, vii, 145–226; see also al-Shābushtī, *Diyārāt* (ed. ʿAwwād), 54–61, (ed. & tr. Kilpatrick), 64–73; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, viii, 595; Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, ix, 5–23; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, ii, 162–168; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xii, 379–383; Ibn Faḍl Allāh, *Masālik* (ed. al-Jubūrī), xiv, 458–463. See *GAS*, ii 518–519; *EI2*, iii, 617–619 (Ch. Pellat); *EAL*, 297–298 (P.F. Kennedy). His extant poetry has been edited several times, by ʿAbd al-Sattār Aḥmad Farrāj, Shawqī Riyāḍ Aḥmad, and Jalīl al-ʿAṭiyyah; see also Najjār, *Shuʿarāʾ ʿAbbāsiyyūn mansiyyūn*, ii, v, 77–89.

2 Muḥammad ibn ʿAbbād (d. 216/831), a member of the Muhallabid family, was governor (*amīr*) of Basra, see al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, iii, 643–649. For the following see *Aghānī*, vii, 151–152; the verse is also quoted ibid., 149, 165 and see Ibn Abī Ṭāhir, *Baghdād*, 215; al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, iii, ii, 1158–1159 (yr 218); Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, vi, 37 (anonymously); al-Bayhaqī, *Maḥāsin*, 421; al-Tanūkhī, *Faraj*, i, 328–329; al-ʿAskarī, *Dīwān al-maʿānī*, ii, 206.

3 ʿAbd Allāh (literally, "God's servant, or slave") is al-Maʾmūn's proper name.

4 *Aghānī* mentions 30,000 dirhams, worth even more than 1000 dinars. In addition to mentioning the poet's illness, it is added that the poet feared the Caliph's anger for having praised al-Amīn.

5 See *Aghānī*, vii, 183–184; al-ʿAskarī, *Dīwān al-maʿānī*, ii, 225; al-Jarīrī, *Jalīs*, i, 231–232.

6 *Khazz* may be silk or cloth with a mixture of silk and wool; the mention of winter suggests the latter here.

quality. I had not seen him before in this. "Abū ʿAlī," I said, "Where did you get this?" "None of your business ‖ how I got it!", he replied. I thought about [269]
it and it occurred to me that he might have got it only a moment earlier from Muways ibn ʿImrān,[7] because I had just seen him arrive at the Banū Tamīm Gate. So I stood up, as if I had something to do. I left the mosque, and there was Muways, wearing an even more splendid robe than the other one. I said,[8]

> How are you this morning, Abū ʿImrān? …

'Very well,' he answered, 'and a good morning to you!' I continued,

> … O noble friend to his friends!

'May God let you hear good things, my friend!' said Muways. I went on:

> I am in need of something. I hope your view about fulfilling it
> will be the same as mine.[9]

'Do tell me, in the name of God!' he said. I said,

> One of your robes of silk and wool, so that
> winter will not see me as it sees me now.

He clasped his hand to his chest and said, 'Take it, with God's blessing!' He took off his robe and I put it on. I returned and found Abū Nuwās still in the same place. Seeing me wearing it, he asked, 'Where did you get that?' I replied, 'From where you got that one!', meaning 'None of your business.'

Among his admired verses are the following, libertine ones:[10]

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7 Muways (not Mūsā as in *Aghānī* or Mu'nis as in the MS and *Jalīs*) ibn ʿImrān ibn Jumayʿ was a wealthy and prominent *mawlā* in Basra, inerested in theological issues, and a patron of poets and literati, including al-Jāḥiẓ; see *EI2*, vii, 814 (Ch. Pellat), *EI3* (Suleiman A. Mourad).

8 Muways may not have been aware immediately that the poet speaks in verse (*khafīf* metre).

9 I have adopted the version of *Aghānī* (… *innanā fī qaḍā'ihā siyyānī*) instead of *ana fīhā wa-anta lī siyyānī* as in the MS.

10 *Aghānī*, vii, 155–156 (vss. 1, 5, 4 with another verse); al-Ḥuṣrī, *Jamʿ*, 171; also attributed, but apparently falsely, to Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān*, iii, 226–227 (10 vss.) and cf. iii, 42–43; al-Bāqillānī,

There was this roguish-tongued man, inventive in making himself disliked,[11]
and who mixed his libertinism with piety:
He spent a night in Ghummā,[12] in search of one that had been warmed at the fire, alluding to it as "the king's daughter".[13]
[270] I surreptitiously handed him a yellow one, like a meteor,
got from the hand of an uncouth believer in a false religion,[14]
{128} Who swore by his religion, by the religion of Moses
and the builder of the Ark,[15] that the wine was boiled.[16]
When the wine's power had made him reel
and had changed his resting into movement,
I uncovered a saffron-coloured mound of dough,
as smooth as a china dish, part of a sand dune.[17]
Then there happened what I shall not divulge
among people, with ravisher and ravished one.

The common people attribute this poem to Abū Nuwās, incorrectly, for it is by al-Ḥusayn ibn al-Ḍaḥḥāk.

Iʿjāz, 216–217 (tr. von Grunebaum, *A Tenth-Century Document*, 89); al-Ḥuṣrī, *Jamʿ*, 171; Ibn Rashīq, *ʿUmdah*, ii, 181; al-Maʿarrī, *Ghufrān*, ii, 140–141 (with a slightly different translation); al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xii, 382.

11 Or, in my earlier translation in al-Maʿarrī, *Ghufrān*: "inventive in denigrating others"; or "of a disposition that evokes disgust" (von Grunebaum). The same phrase, *mukhtaliq al-takrīh*, is used by Ibn al-Muʿtazz, *Dīwān* (ed. al-Sāmarrāʾī), ii, 48, (ed. Sharīf), ii, 224.

12 Ghummā is a village near Baghdad, see Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-buldān* (quoting poems by Wālibah ibn al-Ḥubāb and Jaḥẓah al-Barmakī about drinking wine there).

13 It is about wine. I read, with the *Mukhtaṣar*, *Ghufrān*, and Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān*, iii, 226, *ʿani bnati l-malikī*; the editions, following the MS, have *ʿan ʾbyt al-m.l.kī*, which I do not understand and cannot make scan.

14 Wine merchants are regularly Christians or Jews.

15 *Munshiʾi l-f.l.kī*, unvowelled in the edition. I read, with Abū Nuwās's *Dīwān*, *munshiʾi l-fulukī* (*fuluk* being a variant of *fulk*), referring to Nūḥ/Noah, who reputedly planted the first vine. Reading *al-falaki* ("of the celestial sphere") would refer to God instead of Noah, but this reading is unlikely because it would mean an awkward repetition of the rhyme word, in a verse not quoted by Ibn al-Muʿtazz (*… qamarun | yakraʿu fī baʿḍi anjumi l-falakī*).

16 Boiling wine would have made it permissible to Muslims.

17 The verse, clearly obscene, presents some problems. Farrāj points out that *ʿujnah* is not the same as *ʿijān* ("perineum") and he suggests *ʿajnah*, a licence for *ʿajinah*, "compact, firm". My translation tentatively connects *ʿujnah* or *ʿajnah* with *ʿajīn*, "dough". The *Mukhtaṣar* has *fiḍḍah* ("silver"), *Aghānī* has *wazzah musminah* ("a fat goose"). The last words, *min al-fanak* ("of a fenek") do not make much sense and I have read *mina l-falakī*, with *Aghānī*., where an editorial note explains *falak* as "sandy dune".

Fine verses by him are these:[18]

One in love who gets what he wants, though keeping it a secret,
helped in his love by his beloved:
[Amusement[19] lost him the most precious thing that concerned him;
what is the excuse of someone who loses what concerns him?]
Then nobody but he himself is blamed
for falling short by committing his crime.
He secretly harbours a regret like that of al-Kusaʿī,[20]
when his eyes see what his hands have done.

He said on a certain king:[21]

When the gifts of Mihrajān are exhausted[22]
what my tongue gives will last for you:
Poems that will fill the ends of the earth with what God
has allowed tongues to expand on,[23]
With which nightly travellers will banish drowsiness
and which will distract drinkers from the lute-strings of singing girls.

18 Ibn Dāwūd, *Zahrah*, 82, anonymously, including vs. 2, here taken from the *Mukhtaṣar* (ed. Farrāj, Appendix, 439).

19 Instead of *al-lahw*, *Zahrah* has, more plausibly, *al-khawf* ("fear").

20 Allegedly, a hunter of the tribe of Kusaʿ, mistakenly thinking he had repeatedly missed his target in the dark, angrily broke his precious bow, only to find the following morning that he had killed five onagers, upon which he bit off his thumb. His regret became proverbial. See e.g. al-Thaʿālibī, *Thimār*, 133–134. This verse is a near-quotation of one by an unnamed pre-Islamic poet, quoted in al-Khalīl, *ʿAyn*, i, 192 (*ks*ʿ); it also appears, using the 2nd-ps. sg. and with a different rhyme (*yadākā* instead of *yadāhū*), in *Aghānī*, ii, 109, attributed to the pre-Islamic ʿAdī ibn Marīnā.

21 The word *malik*, "king", is sometimes used vaguely for "ruling person". In Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, vi, 286 vss. 1–2 are said to be by Yazīd ibn al-Muhallab (i.e., Abū Khālid Yazīd ibn Muḥammad al-Muhallabī, on whom see below, § 65, where vss. 1–2 are quoted again) on al-Muʿtamid (r. 256–279/870–892); in al-ʿAskarī, *Jamharat al-amthāl*, i, 20, they are attributed "to a Muhallabid on al-Muʿtamid", with another verse mentioning al-Muʿtamid.

22 *Mihrajān* (Persian *Mihragān*) is an ancient Iranian autumn feast (the name goes back to the ancient deity Mithra) but still widely celebrated, with gifts and poems, in Islamic times, also in Arab countries; see *EI2*, vi, 15–20, "Mihragān" (J. Calmard); *EIr*, "Mehragān" (Simone Cristoforetti).

23 Instead of *min basṭi l-lisānī* the other sources have *min siḥri l-bayānī* ("of the magic of eloquence"), which better explains why God should allow it (magic is usually forbidden, but "some eloquence is truly magic", as a famous saying attributed to the Prophet Muḥammad puts it).

He composed numerous poems. He was a versatile poet, excelling in panegyric,
[271] ‖ love poetry, and invective, with much libertine poetry. He mastered both the serious and the jesting. He is considered to be[24] on a par with Abū Nuwās. In fact, his verse is purer and less mixed than that of Abū Nuwās, who was the servant of his master, Wālibah ibn al-Ḥubāb.[25]

24 Literally, "according to them (*ʿindahum*)", meaning connoisseurs and critics.

25 The last clause is syntactically ambiguous in the Arabic because it could also refer to al-Ḥusayn ibn al-Ḍaḥḥāk; but cf. above, p. 299, on Abū Nuwās as Wālibah's servant.

47 Ibrāhīm ibn Sayyār al-Naẓẓām[1]

Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Ḥanẓalī told us: ʿAmr ibn Baḥr al-Jāḥiẓ told me:[2] One day the servant of Ibrāhīm ibn Sayyār al-Naẓẓām came to us, looking puzzled. We asked him, "What is the matter?" He replied, "A young man of the Sabians[3] asked me a question, adding something that badly shut me up. He asked me, 'What is the reason that wine is forbidden?' So I answered, 'Because it removes one's reason.'[4] He replied, 'But then sleep should also be forbidden, for it removes one's reason.' I said, 'But sleep is sustenance for the body.' He said, 'Then you must forbid any sleep with superfluous sustenance.' And he silenced me."

Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad al-Madāʾinī told me, on the authority of al-Jāḥiẓ: Ibrāhīm al-Naẓẓām recited to Abū l-Hudhayl some verses, including the following one:[5]

> He is delicate; so ethereal that if he were stripped of his trousers
> the air would lift him up.

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1 Abū Isḥāq Ibrāhīm ibn Sayyār, known as al-Naẓẓām (d. between 220/835 and 230/845), is far more famous as a Muʿtazilite theologian than as a poet. He was called al-Naẓẓām ("the stringer") either because he was good at making poetry (*naẓm*), or because he used to string beads and sell them in Basra (Abū Manṣūr al-Baghdādī, *Farq*, 119, al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, vi, 14–15); the latter view may well have been an invention of anti-Muʿtazilite theologians. A *mawlā* from Basra, he moved to Baghdad, where al-Maʾmūn favoured Muʿtazilite views. His many treatises are lost except for a few fragments, but his views are known especially through the works of his pupil al-Jāḥiẓ. Ibn al-Muʿtazz seems to be the only one to include him in a book about poets: he has no entry in *Aghānī* or in Sezgin's volume on poets. He has entries in Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, i, 570–572, under the Muʿtazilite theologians (some poetry is quoted, and he is said to have been in love with Abū Nuwās); al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, vi, 623–625; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, vi, 14–19. See *EI2*, vii, 1057–1058, "al-Naẓẓām" (J. van Ess); van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft*, iii, 296–419.

2 Al-Jāḥiẓ (d. 255/868–869 at an advanced age), prolific and versatile prose writer and theologian, see *EI2*, ii, 385–387, "al-Djāḥiẓ" (Ch. Pellat), *EAL*, 408–409 (D.S. Richards). I have not found the following anecdote in his extant works.

3 On the Sabians (Ṣābiʾūn) of Ḥarrān, see above, p. 40 note 10.

4 *ʿAql* means "reason, intellect, intelligence, mind".

5 Abū l-Hudhayl al-ʿAllāf (d. at an advanced age in 226/840–841 or somewhat later), another important Muʿtazilite theologian, a *mawlā* from Basra like al-Naẓẓām; see *EI2*, i, 127–129, "Abū ʾl-Hudhayl al-ʿAllāf" (H.S. Nyberg), *EI3*, "Abū l-Hudhayl" (Suleiman A. Mourad). For the following, see Ibn Dāwūd, *Zahrah*, 131; Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, i, 571; al-Murtaḍā, *Amālī*, i, 188; al-Raffāʾ, *Muḥibb*, i, 170; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, vi, 624; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, vii, 98. The verse describes an attractive young man. Some sources add one or more verses; the version of al-Khaṭīb has four verses (but not Abū l-Hudhayl's comment). In al-Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥayawān*, vii, 166 Abū l-Hudhayl's words to al-Naẓẓām are given on a different verse, on a woman rather

Abū l-Hudhayl said, "Abū Isḥāq, who composed this verse?" "I did", said al-Naẓẓām. "Then analogical reasoning requires", continued Abū l-Hudhayl, "that he should be buggered with a notional prick."

Ibn al-Kūfī told me: Ibrāhīm al-Naẓẓām occupied himself at first with poetry, [and then he moved to speculative theology],[6] whereas Abū Nuwās was occupied at first with speculative theology and later moved to poetry.

[272] Fine verses by al-Naẓẓām are the following:[7]

O best of those ever seen by eyes!
One who matches you is never perceived and cannot exist.
Your excellence is unlimited and unequalled,
and thoughts cannot encompass its extent.
{129} You have been created without likeness to anything;
You are above, and all other living beings[8] are below.
It is as if the realm had been nothing before,
until al-Amīn came to reign over the realm.

Ibrāhīm al-Naẓẓām is the one who said,[9]

I kept taking the amphora's spirit, gently,
deeming it licit to shed the blood without slaughter,
Until I doubled up[10] with two spirits in my body,
and the wineskin cast down, body without spirit.

He composed few poems, drawing upon speculative theology and dialectics in his poetry. [Ibrāhīm ibn Sayyār[11] was counted among the poets; he composed

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than a boy (also Ibn Abī ʿAwn, *Ajwibah*, 149; al-Ābī, *Nathr*, vii, 265–266; Ibn Ḥamdūn, *Tadhkirah*, vi, 229).

6 Parenthesis added by Farrāj.

7 Ascribed to Abū Nuwās in his *Dīwān*, i, 299 (5 vss.); Ibn Manẓūr, *Akhbār*, i, 117; German translation in Wagner, *Abū Nuwās*, 345.

8 *Al-thaqalān*, a dual, is usually interpreted as humans and jinn; see Q al-Raḥmān 55:31.

9 Ibn al-Muʿtazz, *Fuṣūl al-tamāthīl*, 47; Ibn Qutaybah, *Ashribah*, 85; idem, *Taʾwīl mukhtalif al-Ḥadīth*, 62 (attacking al-Naẓẓām for his impiety); Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, vi, 362; Ibn Rashīq, *Qurāḍah*, 60–61; al-Samʿānī, *Ansāb*, v, 507; also attributed to Abū Nuwās, see his *Dīwān*, iii, 95. These sources avoid the inconsistency of having an amphora (*dann*) followed by a wineskin (*ziqq*) by having the same word in both verses.

10 I follow Farrāj in not adopting Eghbal's suggestion of reading *intashaytu* ("I was inebriated") instead of *inthanaytu*, as in all other sources.

11 This substantial bracketed passage is taken from the *Mukhtaṣar* (ed. Farrāj, Appendix, 440). Only the last of the following sayings has been found in other sources.

panegyrics on caliphs, viziers, and nobles. Al-Naẓẓām said, "I would prefer a man to die in the saddle, seeking his livelihood, rather than die for the sake of his Lord." This is a rejection of Sufism. Describing someone's speech he said,[12] "Smooth of body, multifarious, easy to approach, its beginnings and endings entwined; it penetrates the heart's core, piercing it, and the innermost soul, hitting it." Al-Naẓẓām also said, "Zayd ibn ʿAlī[13] said to a man who had reviled him in the presence of Hishām ibn ʿAbd al-Malik: 'I appeal to God! I am neither an annexed entangled root nor a baggage camel made to ride behind.[14] And you are neither my slave, so that I could beat you, nor my equal, so that I could revile you.'" Al-Naẓẓam also said, "A noble man, in his nobility, finds that he must complete what he has begun and increase what he has bestowed, and that his one hand should be a pledge for the other." Al-Naẓẓām also said, "He who loves you forbids you; he who hates you goads you."[15]]

12 He uses *sajʿ*, rhyming prose.

13 On Zayd ibn ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn see above, p. 62. Hishām ibn ʿAbd al-Malik reigned 105–125/724–743.

14 The highly figurative words seem to point at his august lineage (*washījah*, "entangled roots" sometimes means *ḥashw*, "rabble").

15 Attributed to "a certain Arab sage (*baʿḍ ḥukamāʾ al-ʿArab*)" in al-Dīnawarī, *Mujālasah*, v, 59; anonymously in al-Rāghib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, i, 78, Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, *Bahjat al-majālis*, ii, 189; attributed to Buzurjmihr (a famous pre-Islamic Persian sage) in al-Ābī, *Nathr al-durr*, vii, 72.

48 Abū Muḥammad al-Yazīdī[1]

Aḥmad ibn al-Khalīl told me on the authority of Muḥammad ibn Hārūn ibn Sulaymān: One day Abū Muḥammad al-Yazīdī and Salm al-Khāsir met at a session with ʿĪsā ibn ʿUmar.[2] Salm said to al-Yazīdī, "Make a lampoon on me, on the rhyme of Imruʾ al-Qays's poem beginning 'Many an archer of the Banū Thuʿal | sticking out his hands from his cover'!" Abū Muḥammad, who was a decent and pious man, replied, "Why would you want that?" "I just want it", said Salm. Al-Yazīdī said, "You don't need to expose yourself to something bad! You should be spared this." Salm wished in fact to let ʿĪsā believe that al-Yazīdī was inarticulate, unable to respond and compose poetry. Salm went on: ‖ "Really, you [273] are extremely protective of yourself towards me!", goading him. ʿĪsā said, "Come on, Abū Muḥammad, you must!" Then Abū Muḥammad took off a sandal and wrote on the sole:

Many a man safely covered with comfort
spurned his bliss, overconfidently.
Many a man whose wellbeing has lasted long
was hit by Fate with one of its changes of fortune,

1 Abū Muḥammad Yaḥyā ibn al-Mubārak ibn al-Mughīrah al-Yazīdī (d. 202/817), either a member or a *mawlā* of the tribe of ʿAdī ibn ʿAbd Manāf, was a philologist, a specialist in Qur'an readings (*qirāʾat*), and a minor poet some of whose descendants were also poets and scholars, among them Muḥammad al-Yazīdī (see below, §73); see *GAS*, ii, 610–611 ("Familie al-Yazīdī"), *EI2*, xi, 316–317, "al-Yazīdī" (R. Sellheim), and Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, i, 138–141 (*Akhbār al-Yazīdiyyīn ʿalā l-nasaq*). Their poetry has been collected by Muḥsin Ghayyāḍ, *Shiʿr al-Yazīdiyyīn*. The name al-Yazīdī derives from Yazīd, son of the caliph al-Manṣūr, because Abū Muḥammad was the tutor of his son; later he became the tutor of al-Maʾmūn. He also wrote some treatises on philological subjects (see *GAS*, ix, 63–64); he has entries in Ibn al-Jarrāḥ, *Waraqah*, 28–31; *Aghānī*, xx, 215–262 (including other family members); al-Zubaydī, *Ṭabaqāt al-naḥwiyyīn*, 61–66; al-Marzubānī, *Nūr al-qabas*, 80–87; idem, *Muʿjam al-shuʿarāʾ*, 487–488; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, xvi, 220–222; Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, xx, 30–34; Ibn al-Anbārī, *Nuzhah*, 69–72; al-Qifṭī, *Inbāh*, iv, 31–39; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, vi, 183–191; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xxviii, 278–281.

2 For Salm al-Khāsir see above, §15; Abū ʿUmar ʿĪsā ibn ʿUmar al-Thaqafī (d. 149/766) was a philologist from Basra and, like Abū Muḥammad al-Yazīdī, a specialist in Qur'anic readings. Versions of the following are in *Aghānī*, xix, 271–272, xx, 219–220; al-Marzubānī, *Nūr al-qabas*, 83. For Imruʾ al-Qays's poem (with the unusual rhyme *-rih* and the rare metre *al-madīd*) see his *Dīwān*, 123–127. Poems with the same metre and rhyme, apparently offering a challenge, were also composed by Ṣāliḥ ibn ʿAbd al-Quddūs (see above, p. 131), ʿAlī ibn Jabalah (see above, pp. 251–256), and Abū Nuwās (*Dīwān*, i, 139–152). For similar anecdotes about requests to be lampooned in jest, see van Gelder, *The Bad and the Ugly*, 52. Writing the lampoon on the sole of a sandal adds insult to injury.

With arrows that will not fail to hit a vital part,
destroying the strands of his strength.
Thus is Fate: overturning
a man's state to another state in his lifetime.
It mingles hardship with ease,
and a man's prosperity with his plight.
Salm foolishly was disrespectful of his mother
and of Salm's father, despite his old age.
[Every day there is a man behind him
wielding a lance, running after him,][3]
Slipping his schlong into his arse,
like a lizard slipping into his hole.

Salm said, "By God! That comes from inviting evil! I really did not need that!" ʿĪsā ibn ʿUmar said to him, "God damn you, may God thwart your fortune! That man asked you to be exempt and he tried to protect you, preserving his virtue. But you insisted on making him put you into your mother's cunt!"

Fine verses by him are these:[4]

You fell ill and your complaint made my heart ill!
I used to sleep but now I cannot fall asleep.
If any sick person's beauty would increase
just as yours does, despite disease,
Then no sick people needed to be visited [274]
and their complaint would be counted a great blessing.

When he had returned safely from Mecca he said:[5]

O joy, when we turned our camels' faces
towards our loved ones, with haste and hurry!

3 Farrāj adds the verse, necessary for the drift of the poem; it is found in both versions of *Aghānī* and in *Nūr al-qabas*.

4 See the anecdote in al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xii, 115 and al-Badīʿī, *Ṣubḥ*, 265–266, where Abū Manṣūr al-Ḥalabī (identified in *Ṣubḥ* as Ibn al-Qāriḥ, the recipient of al-Maʿarrī's *Risālat al-Ghufrān*) points out that similar verses by the poet and critic Ibn Wakīʿ ("If everyone who is ill | increased in beauty like you, || Then everyone who is healthy | would wish he were poorly") are stolen from al-Yazīdī (whose verses are quoted anonymously).

5 *Aghānī*, xx, 215 (as a song text) and 239, with four more verses; al-Shimshāṭī, *Anwār*, 402; al-Raffāʾ, *Muḥibb*, ii, 73 (attributed to a Bedouin, *aʿrābī*).

{130} We urged them on and they were not driven from habit,[6]
but our yearning has an urge that the camels have not.

In a lampoon on al-Aṣmaʿī he said:[7]

I see that the ignominies of Qurayb, al-Aṣmaʿī's father,
are many and all-embracing.
When he stands up he stumbles on his cloak,
led by an inclining ear.
And who are you? What are you (if your lineage is true)
but a man of Bāhilah?[8]

The following is part of his love poetry; but it was not a genre he was keen on:[9]

My love does not visit and cannot be visited;
he is reluctant to be joined with me.
The tears in my eyes never dry up,
steadily pouring forth in streams,
On account of a face circumambulated by my descriptions,[10]
only to drown in his beauties, or be perplexed.
It is as if his cheeks are nourished with wine;
what is adorned with heady wine should suffice you.
Even a weak glance would wound him whenever
a blush blooms on his cheeks.
His stature is a willow branch; he steps,
heaving a sand dune that chokes his loincloth.

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6 Tentative translation of *wa-mā yurmayna* (*Aghānī* and *Anwār*: *yuʾtayna*, *Muḥibb*: *yūnīna*) *min daʾabin*.

7 For ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Qurayb al-Aṣmaʿī, belonging to the tribe of Bāhilah, see above, p. 161. Vs. 3, with two other verses, in Ibn al-Muʿtazz, *Badīʿ*, 31 (illustrating *tajnīs* in a verse not quoted here); see also Ibn al-Jarrāḥ, *Waraqah*, 30; al-ʿAskarī, *Ṣināʿatayn*, 338; al-Marzubānī, *Muʿjam*, 488; al-Sīrāfī, *Akhbār*, 46; al-Thaʿālibī, *Thimār*, 119–120; Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, xx, 32; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, vi, 188. Vss. 1–2 have not been found elsewhere.

8 On Bāhilah, see *EI2*, i, 920–921 (W. Caskel); the tribe is called "ill-reputed" ibid., 717 (in the entry on al-Aṣmaʿī by B. Lewin, but the only reference he gives for this is al-Yazīdī's verse).

9 Not found elsewhere.

10 Interpretation of *ʿalā wajhin tuṭīfu bihī ṣifātī* uncertain. The usual word for "(poetic) descriptions" is *awṣāf*, not *ṣifāt* ("characteristics, attributes"). Or perhaps it is "On [my] face, which is encircled by my characteristics (i.e., where my state is plain to see?) …", but the following suggests that the beloved's face is meant.

Abū ʿAbd Allāh al-Bīwardī[11] told me: Muḥammad ibn al-Ashʿath ‖ al-Makkī told us: Al-Yazīdī came to us in Mecca in the month of Rajab. He proceeded to worship, exerting himself piously with fasting and almsgiving. Our friends among the literati would go to meet him and be sociable with him, but he would say, "There is nothing I would rather do than join you and converse with you, but this is a town where one can get near to God with pious deeds. I'll stay here only one or two months and then I'll go back to my town. But it will be good if you decide not to let any filth occur in your gatherings, nor any obscenity or lampoons in verse or anything like it." [275]

In Mecca he composed many poems on admonition and wisdom, not on other themes.[12] His poems are many. He was the tutor of al-Maʾmūn. [Muḥammad ibn al-Jahm mentioned him and said,[13] "When he spoke he was of use, when he was asked his gifts were profuse, what he began he would reproduce."]

11 Thus in the *Mukhtaṣar*; Bīward or Bāward is a shortening of Abīward, a place in Khorasan; Farrāj's text, following the MS, has al-Tanwardī, which is clearly corrupt.

12 Compare Ibn al-Jarrāḥ, *Waraqah*, 28–29: "Ismāʿīl, Abū Muḥammad's son, said, 'My father composed many poems on al-Rashīd, Jaʿfar ibn Yaḥyā, and others, but shortly before his death he burnt them and enjoined us not to publicise anything except his admonitory poems.'"

13 The bracketed passage is taken from the *Mukhtaṣar* (ed. Farrāj, Appendix, 440). The following is in rhyming prose. The speaker is perhaps Muḥammad ibn al-Jahm al-Barmakī, who served as governor under al-Maʾmūn.

49 al-Ḥārithī[1]

His name is ʿAbd al-Malik ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥīm. Abū Mālik al-Anṣārī told us: Abū l-Aswad, the poet,[2] told me: Al-Ḥārithī was an excellent poet, eloquent, proficient, and naturally gifted. With his poetry he did not resemble the modern, sedentary poets and his style was that of the Bedouin Arabs. When he had composed his wonderful, well-known poem, poets acknowledged him as their leader and submitted to him. He is one of those poets copies of whose poems were written in gold. The poem we referred to is this:[3]

Here I am, you who seek me, coming forward,
my weapons at the ready, to the one who calls,
To protect the protected territory of those absent men of Madhḥij,[4]
and those who witness will praise my assault.
[276] One who is eager is not dismayed in battle, when
every keen man finds himself thrown into it.[5]
War has laid its "egg" on my head[6]
and made an impression on the ears of one who takes it in.

1 Abū l-Walīd (or Abū Qābūs) ʿAbd al-Malik ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥīm al-Ḥārithī (dates unknown), from Syria of the tribe of al-Ḥārith ibn Kaʿb, active in Baghdad, at some time imprisoned during Hārūn al-Rashīd's reign. A minor poet, he is effusively (Sezgin: "überschwänglich") praised by Ibn al-Muʿtazz, and al-Aṣmaʿī is reported to have said that he is superior to Jarīr, al-Farazdaq, and al-Akhṭal (al-Shayzarī, *Jamharah*, 125). Verses by him are quoted in several sources but he has no entries in other premodern books on poets. The famous poem with rhyme letter L that is often attributed to the pre-Islamic Jewish poet al-Samawʾal (opening Arberry's *Arabic Poetry: A Primer for Students*, 30–35) is also attributed to al-Ḥārithī (in Abū Tammām's *Ḥamāsah*, see al-Marzūqī, *Sharḥ*, 110–124, and Ibn Ṭabāṭabā, *ʿIyār*, 107–109). See GAS, ii, 539–540. His extant poetry was collected by Khalīl Mardam in *Majallat Majmaʿ al-Lughah al-ʿArabiyyah bi-Dimashq*, 32 (1957), 405–411, 561–576, by Hilāl Nājī in *al-Mawrid*, 12 (1983), 223–247, and by ʿAbbās Hānī al-Jarrākh as *Dīwān al-Ḥārithī ʿAbd al-Malik ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥīm* (Beirut, 2014).

2 Not identified.

3 In spite of its alleged one-time fame, no other sources for the poem are known.

4 Al-Ḥārith ibn Kaʿb (al-Ḥārithī's tribe) was connected with the large tribe of Madhḥij and became considered part of it (Ibn al-Kalbī/Caskel, *Ǧamharat an-nasab*, i, 258, ii, 308).

5 *Ruyyiqa*, as in the MS and the editions, is problematic; I follow Farrāj's suggestion, reading *rubiqa*, "was thrown (into an affair)", another possibility being *runniqa*, "was confined (in a place)".

6 This is the literal meaning of *bāḍati l-ḥarbu ʿalā hāmatī*, but *bayḍah*, "egg", also means "helmet". As Farrāj notes, this, together with the next verse, resembles a verse of a well-known poem with the same metre and rhyme composed shortly before AD 622 by Abū Qays ibn al-Aslat al-Anṣārī, in *Mufaḍḍaliyyāt* (no. 75) and al-Qurashī, *Jamharat ashʿār al-ʿArab*, 234–236:

It has entrusted to me eyes of sleeplessness,
not letting my body lie down for a light doze.
(I am a man) the rope of whose strength is tightly twined, full of high spirit,[7]
able to harm people and to benefit them.
He is not found to be heedless.
If he is roused, he is roused, quickly returning (?);[8]
Proud, taking his coat of mail off his shoulder, {131}
like the tip of a lance, tall,[9]
As if you saw a broad-headed dappled bull,
appearing through the dust of the plain.

Poets and literati are unanimous in declaring that these verses are not in the style of his age and that no one could aspire to anything similar. Upon my life, these words, with their eloquence and strength, are such that if you hear them, you would think you could compose something like them; but if one attempts this, one finds it as unattainable as the Pleiades. Such is the case with poetry that is of extreme excellence that is out of reach. A certain scholar, when asked, "What is poetry, in your view?" answered, "What is easy and unattainable."[10]

Al-Ḥārithī composed a poem in which he laments his brother, Saʿīd ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥīm, which is not inferior to the poem of ‖ Mutammim in which he [277] laments his brother Mālik, which has the same rhyme letter.[11] In it, he says,

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Qad ḥaṣṣati l-bayḍatu raʾsī fa-mā | aṭʿamu ghumḍan ghayra tahjāʿī, "The helmet has rubbed the hair off my head, and I taste not sleep save as a brief doze" (tr. Lyall in *Mufaḍḍalīyāt*, 226).

7 Parenthesis added because of a shift from the 1st to the 3rd person. On the image of strength (*mirrah*) as a twined rope, see Bravmann, *Spiritual Background*, 51–52.

8 I do not understand *hīja bi-munṣāʿī*.

9 Following Farrāj in reading *shaʿshāʿī* instead of *qaʿqāʿī*.

10 *Al-sahl wa-l-mumtaniʿ*, a common expression for the seemingly easy, found also in different forms; see e.g. van Gelder, "Poetry for Easy Listening", 46–47.

11 The poem (with the same rhyme letter and metre) by Mutammim ibn Nuwayrah al-Yarbūʿī (d. during ʿUmar's reign or shortly afterwards) is in the *Mufaḍḍaliyyāt* (no. 67, 51 vss.) and in al-Qurashī, *Jamharah*, 265–268 (44 vss.). For al-Ḥārithī's poem (91 vss.) see al-Shayzarī, *Jamharah*, 125–128 (attributed to Abū Qābūs al-Ḥārithī); Ibn al-Muʿtazz quotes vss. 1–8 and 31 (and some more verses below), but it seems that some preceding verses are lost. Cheikho, *Shuʿarāʾ al-Naṣrāniyyah baʿd al-Islām*, ii, 246–248 quotes the poem from al-Shayzarī's book, taking the poet to be a Christian because "Abū Qābūs al-Naṣrānī" is mentioned (al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, viii, 35–36) in connection with Jaʿfar ibn Yaḥyā al-Barmakī; but it is unlikely that this Abū Qābūs is to be identified with someone with the Islamic name ʿAbd al-Malik ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥīm and whose son was called Muḥammad.

No mother[12] of a young gazelle, who has left it in a hollow
in the earth and has gone forth to graze and sleep,
Reddish,[13] coloured like wild rocket,[14] one day old,
just strong enough to stand up and kneel again,
Trembling when walking a short distance, like
a willow twig that twists and quivers—
She stays before him, standing in the path[15] of the east wind,
crooning where she grazes, so that it may hear her.
When it does not notice her she calls out; when it utters a faint sound[16]
and she hears it, she is reminded of her young and turns to it.
Then a beast with bald jawbones opposes her, lean,
creature of the desert, starved morning and evening.
It came for a second helping of it,[17] and left nothing
for anyone seeking it except scattered shreds of flesh.
Then came a breeze of the east wind with its fragrance
in the morning, and a flowing of milk that hurt the bereaved
mother …

These words make other poets feel powerless and embarrassed. In this poem he also says:

Bright, with radiant forehead, as if
he were the shining of the moon on its fourteenth night.

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12 The first verse begins with *Fa-mā* …, a negative particle followed by a noun, the standard opening of an extended comparison that often stretches over many verses, forming one very long sentence, of the pattern "No X (…) is more Y than is Z", but the syntax and sense are left unresolved here; it occurs in vs. 21 of al-Shayzarī's text: *bi-awjaʿa minnī yā Saʿīdu*, "(a gazelle who has lost her young …) is not pained more than I am, Saʿīd!" In Mutammim's poem a similar but much shorter extended simile (*wa-mā … bi-awjada minnī*) stretches from vs. 41 to 44 (version of *Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*), where camel mothers are described seeing their young devoured by wolves.

13 Following Farrāj's emendation of *l.kh.bs* to *lakhīs*.

14 Arberry (*Seven Odes*), Alan Jones (*Early Arabic Poetry*, ii, 168), and Suzanne Stetkevych (*Mute Immortals*, 10), in their translations of vs. 6 of Labīd's *Muʿallaqah*, all leave *ayhuqān* untranslated. Ghaleb, *Dictionnaire*, identifies it as "wild rocket", the flowers of which may be pink.

15 Following Farrāj in reading *fa-ẓallat bi-mustanni l-ṣabā* instead of fa-*ḍallat tumashshīna l-ṣabā*.

16 Taking, with Farrāj, *nāba nab'atan* to be a licence for *naba'a nab'atan*.

17 Translation of *fa-anhala minhu baʿda ʿallin* uncertain. The verbs *anhala* and *ʿalla* normally refer to drinking but they appear to have a different sense here.

Were it not that we would abandon what we have stipulated for this book, it would be better to include the rest of the poem instead of omitting it. It is true that we have quoted some lengthy poems elsewhere, but we have quoted only those that were not current among most people. As for poems that are found and well known, we do not quote them if they are long, ‖ but limit ourselves [278]
to quoting some few verses of every poem, or even to merely mentioning the poem and quoting only one verse from it, just as we did in the section on al-Sayyid[18] and similar poets, referring to their most important poems.

Beautiful, too, is his poem on his brother in which he says:[19]

Wellbeing, and wit,[20]
and wine, cooled,
Are the bliss of this world; but all things
in this world are destined to end.
When it shows you joy
it will turn to grief, to replace it.[21]
All good things and all bad things
are made to pass.
Saʿīd, my soul's full brother,
left heartache inside my soul.

Fine verses by him—though all his poetry is fine—are these:[22]

Instead of sweet promise Tuktam brought delay;
but what love will last if it is not freely given?
She said, and passion showed what was in her heart, {132}
and no door nor any lock remained for secrets,
"Have you let my family know, the evening you visited us,
openly? What is my excuse, now that my family knows?"
I said, "What happened then will not recur;
what else can you do but be cautious and blame me?"

18 Al-Sayyid al-Ḥimyarī (§3).

19 Not found elsewhere.

20 The text (*inna salīman wa-inna ẓarfan*) looks corrupt and I follow Farrāj in reading *wa-inna salman wa-inna ẓarfan*. Alternatively, one could read *Inna Sulaymā* (a girl's name, in which case Ẓarf could also be a girl's name).

21 Following Farrāj's emendation *badīlā*, instead of the syntactically odd *muzīlā*.

22 Not found elsewhere, except the last verse. Several emendations by Farrāj are taken from the *Mukhtaṣar*.

She said, "I will not disgrace us, being cautious about us
or by my saying something that will lead to revenge."
[279] I said to her, "I did not visit you intentionally,
even though there's nothing like you and me among people.
I did not come to you on purpose; but with this passion
my feet move to wherever my heart loves."[23]

Al-Ḥārithī said:[24]

And he did not keep his cooking pot to himself, away from his neighbour,
to eat his fill while the neighbours were hungry in the evening.[25]
He let his wealth slip away,[26] thus preserving his honour,
and he made others prosper while misers give little and suffer loss.[27]
He had a hand that held a gift to his friend,
and another that was poison prepared for those who opposed him.
He kept his hearing above foul and obscene speech
and held it free from being spoken or heard.
Whenever he reached the utmost extent[28] of glory
he rose up, pursuing something higher and loftier than that.

All poets must prostrate themselves at this. If our book contained nothing but al-Ḥārithī's poetry it would be glorious.

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23 This verse is quoted in several works by al-Thaʿālibī, attributed to ʿAbd al-Malik ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥīm al-Ḥārithī in his *Khāṣṣ al-khāṣṣ*, 162 and *Laṭāʾif al-luṭf*, 132; to al-Lajlāj al-Ḥārithī in *al-Tawfīq wa-l-talfīq*, 113 and *al-Tamthīl wa-l-muḥāḍarah*, 86; to al-Lajlāj in *Yatīmat al-dahr*, iii, 84; and to Ṣāliḥ ibn ʿAbd al-Quddūs in *al-Iʿjāz wa-l-ījāz*, 177; also anonymously in al-Māwardī, *Adab al-dunyā wa-l-dīn*, 190. The second hemistich is quoted anonymously in al-Maydānī, *Majmaʿ al-amthāl*, i, 40. Apparently there has been a confusion with an obscure pre-Islamic poet called Ṭufayl ibn Yazīd (or Zayd) ibn ʿAbd Yaghūth, known as al-Lajlāj al-Ḥārithī (see *Aghānī*, xvi, 328, al-Baghdādī, *Khizānah*, ii, 202).

24 They are vss. 73, 72, 82, 81, 80 of the elegy on his brother Saʿīd, part of which was quoted above.

25 I prefer to read, with *Jamharat al-Islām*, *yumsūna* instead of *yamshūna*.

26 Farrāj emends *afāfa* to *anāfa*, "(His wealth) increased", which would be wrong in this context; Eghbal suggests *athāba*, but I read, with *Jamharat al-Islām*, *afāta*.

27 Reading *wa-ūḍiʿā* instead of *wa-awḍaʿā* as in Farrāj's text.

28 Reading, with *Jamharat al-Islām*, *madā* instead of *ʿurā*.

50 Muḥammad ibn Yasīr al-Riyāshī[1]

Jaʿfar ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Nuṣayr[2] told me: Muḥammad ibn ʿĀmir al-Ḥanafī told me: ‖ Aḥmad ibn Yūsuf al-Kātib[3] and Muḥammad ibn Yasīr were close friends. [280]
One day Aḥmad wrote to him, inviting him to visit him and have a good time together. Ibn Yasīr replied:[4]

I shall come on conditions: if you do not fulfil them
I shall return and I shall not argue further.
Let a horse be saddled for me late at night
(you know about my late night trips before dawn),
So I can do what I need to do. Then I'll return
to you, where a barber[5] should be present when I come,
Who will cut my hair and trim my moustache,
after which a hammam will be ready and someone to perfume my clothes.
And a bowl filled with "the seal of it",[6]
which he will provide for me, willingly, not being difficult.

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1 This is Farrāj's emendation of "Muḥammad ibn Bashīr al-ʿAdwānī" as in the MS. Muḥammad ibn Yasīr al-Riyāshī is often confused with Muḥammad ibn Bashīr al-ʿAdwānī (d. c. 120/738), called al-Khārijī (i.e., belonging to Khārijah ibn ʿAdwān, not because he was a Khārijite); on him see *GAS*, ii, 428 (Bashīr and Yasīr are easily confused in writing). Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad ibn Yasīr al-Riyāshī, sometimes called al-Ḥimyarī (d. probably early 3rd/9th c.), a *mawlā* from Basra, where he lived all his life, was a poet of satire and some interesting poems on animals. He is described as learned, stingy, and fond of wine. He has entries in Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 879–880; Ibn al-Jarrāḥ, *Waraqah*, 120; *Aghānī*, xiv, 16–50; al-Marzubānī, *Muʿjam*, 353–354; idem, *Muwashshaḥ*, 457; al-Qifṭī, *Muḥammadūn*, 198–200 (as Muḥammad ibn Bashīr al-ʿAdwānī); al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, ii, 252–255 (also called Muḥammad ibn Bashīr). See *GAS*, ii, 506–507. His poetry has been collected by Pellat in *al-Mashriq*, 49 (1955), 289–338 and by Maẓhar al-Ḥajjī as *Dīwān Muḥammad ibn Yasīr al-Riyāshī*. One notes that the entry incorrectly headed "al-Riyāshī, Muḥammad ibn Bashīr" in *EAL*, 664 is in fact about a philologist called al-ʿAbbās ibn al-Faraj al-Riyāshī.

2 Or Naṣīr.

3 See above, p. 332.

4 Also in al-Qifṭī, *Muḥammadūn*, 198–199; in the different and more extended version of the anecdote in *Aghānī*, xiv, 17–19 it is Muḥammad ibn Ayyūb ibn Sulaymān, governor of Basra, who invites the poet. See Muḥammad ibn Yasīr, *Dīwān*, 70–72.

5 A *ḥajjām* is strictly a "cupper" who draws blood for medicinal purposes, using metal or glass cups.

6 An allusion to Q al-Muṭaffifīn 83:25–26, on the dwellers in heaven: *They drink from a pure wine, sealed, whose seal is musk*. The version of *Aghānī* has "And a large bowl filled with fragrant wine".

Aḥmad ibn Yūsuf wrote in reply:

He made conditions, when he came, as if
he were a first-class singer or a rent boy!
I swear, were it not for the respect between us,
Bashshār and Yāsir would cuff his ears.[7]

Ibrāhīm ibn Manṣūr the grammarian told me: Ibn Abī l-ʿAlāʾ told me:[8] One day a man of the upper classes was boasting to Ibn Yasīr. The man said to him, "Hey you! Would you vie with me, whose father went out hunting among four thousand slave girls, on four thousand grey horses, with each girl holding on her hand a white falcon, hunting peacocks in meadows of saffron!"[9] Ibn Yasīr replied, "*We have not heard of this in the last religion. This is nothing but an invention!*"[10] The man put him on a sprightly grey horse, assigned [281] ‖ to him a beautiful girl, gave him a peacock-coloured robe to put on, and made him carry a basket {133} of saffron. "If what I said is false," he said, "at least what I have done now ‖ is true!" Ibn Yasīr replied, "What you said is also true."

The following verses by Ibn Yasīr are admired and are popular among Arabs and non-Arabs:[11]

If it were not for the little girl[12] I would not be afraid of destitution
and I would not wander at night through thick darknesses.
Knowing the lowliness of an orphan girl treated harshly by her kin
only makes me more eager to live a proper life.
I am afraid of the coarseness of an uncle, the harshness of a brother,
while I was afraid for her, that she would be hurt by what was said.

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7 Bashshār and Yāsir are presumably the host's servants. In the *Aghānī* version the poet, on arrival, is tied to a column, to punish him for his presumptuous demands, while the rest enjoy their meal. He is released when he recants, saying, "Enough then! We don't want all of that." They sit down and eat together.

8 See al-Qifṭī, *Muḥammadūn*, 199.

9 The MS has *min afrikhat al-zaʿfarān* (Farrāj has *min min afrikhat al-zaʿfarān*), which is obscure. I read, with al-Qifṭī, *fī riyāḍ al-zaʿfarān*.

10 Q Ṣād 38:7.

11 Anonymously in Abū Tammām's *Ḥamāsah* (al-Marzūqī, *Sharḥ*, 282–284) but attributed to Isḥāq ibn Khalaf (d. c. 230/845, see GAS, ii, 575) in al-Tibrīzī's *Sharḥ*, 210, also in Ibn Shākir, *Fawāt*, i, 163 and al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, viii, 412; anonymously in Ibn Qutaybah, *ʿUyūn*, iii, 94; al-Bayhaqī, *Maḥāsin*, 563; al-Khaṭṭābī, *ʿUzlah*, 123; al-Ḥuṣrī, *Zahr*, 529–530; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh Dimashq*, xxxviii, 135. See also Muḥammad ibn Yasīr, *Dīwān*, 148–150.

12 Most sources give her name, Umaymah, instead of *al-bunayyah*; she is his daughter (thus al-Marzūqī and al-Tibrīzī) or his niece, left in his care (al-Ḥuṣrī, Ibn Shākir).

When I think of my girl, when she will lament me,
my own tears flow with blood because of my daughter's tears.
She wishes me to stay alive while I wish her death, out of pity:
for death is the noblest visitor for women.[13]

These are words, as you can hear, as sweet as pure water, and motifs as subtle as licit magic. Beautiful are also these verses:[14]

He was alone with his worries, entrenched in his heart;
a resolve to travel far made him restless.
Unexpectedly, the rejection by a loved one
and a friend's turning away had shown him Death's face.
Sickness assaulted him; he was kept sleepless by passion,
by a slanderer in the evening and a reprover in the morning.
Fortitude forsook him, consolation parted with him,
and he was found as one alive looking like one killed.
The relentless stream of tears makes visible furrows
on his cheeks, carved by the course of the flow …

[This is a motif that is admired and preferred by poets.][15]

All for a unique one,[16] who, when God created his body
and formed him as something singular and peerless,
Showed himself as a full moon, not affected in his celestial place [282]
by an eclipse, not yet darkened by setting in the morning.
He has killed hearts and drawn souls to himself
which revealed themselves to be bereft of sense because of him …

13 Compare a similar, anonymous poem in al-Bayhaqī, *Maḥāsin*, 563: "I love my little daughter and I wish | I could bury her inside a grave; || Not because I dislike her, but | fearing I might die and she would be lost after I am gone (…)". Another poet wishes for a daughter three kinds of protection: "a husband to take care of her, a woman's chamber to shelter her, | and a grave to hide her—and the best of those is the grave" (ibid., attributed to ʿUbayd Allāh ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Ṭāhir in al-ʿAskarī, *Dīwān al-maʿānī*, ii, 251 and al-Māwardī, *Adab al-dunyā wa-l-dīn*, 162).

14 Not found elsewhere; see Muḥammad ibn Yasīr, *Dīwān*, 111–112 (the editor says that he thinks that the verses are by a later poet, without explaining why. Perhaps he was thinking of the unusual and complicated metaphor of the last verse).

15 This and the following parenthesis are taken from the *Mukhtaṣar* (ed. Farrāj, Appendix, 441).

16 Among the meanings of *bidʿah* are "something novel, unprecedented, innovation, heresy". The word is feminine but the following pronouns are masculine.

[This is of the kind that other poets are incapable of. From the same poem:]

My friends![17] I used to be content with little of him,
though not content with little for his sake.
My friends! My body is held in the hand of its emaciation,
with my heart as its drinking companion, with a glass of a parched one.

As you can see, this is nothing but licit magic. Admired are also these verses by him:[18]

A bad companion is like an incurable disease
that runs here and there when sweat pours over one's cheeks.[19]
He shows and reports about his companion's weak spots,
while he buries anything decent he sees in him.
So if he is like that, dissociate yourself from him,
or if he dies, do not attend his funeral.(?)[20]

Muḥammad ibn Yasīr also composed many gnomic and some fine admonitory pieces. He excelled in the description of animals, such as birds and sheep. He composed a long elegy on an orchard ravaged by sheep.[21] It is said that his "orchard" measured a mere square cubit. Others say that it was only some barley under a jar of water that was consumed. We shall not quote it here, for fear of making the book too long.

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17 He uses the conventional dual here and in the next verse.

18 Muḥammad ibn Yasīr, *Dīwān*, 151–152, and attributed to him in al-Qifṭī, *Muḥammadūn*, 199–200. The attribution to him is likely to be incorrect. The verses, with two additional ones, are attributed to al-Muqannaʿ al-Kindī (early Umayyad period, see GAS, ii, 433–434) in Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 739–740, and, with one additional verse, in al-Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥayawān*, iii, 138–139, al-Tawḥīdī, *Ṣadāqah*, 303. They are attributed to Rāfiʿ ibn Huraym al-Yarbūʿī (pre-Islamic, GAS, ii, 195) in al-Qālī, *Amālī*, ii, 182 and to al-Muthaqqab al-ʿAbdī (pre-Islamic, GAS, ii, 118–189) in Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, *Bahjat al-majālis*, i, 724.

19 Instead of "cheek(s)" (*khadd*) other sources have "body" (*jawf*) or "skin" (*jild*), in which case *irfaḍḍa* means "(when it) spreads". The comparison looks strained whichever reading one chooses.

20 Translation uncertain. The text has *khabanā*, which is obscure; Farrāj glosses it as "death", referring to the idiom *khabanat'hū khabūn*, "death hid him, tucked him in (like a garment)". Other sources have *jananā* ("grave, tomb") or *kafanā* ("shroud"). I believe that *khabanā* is probably a corruption of *jananā*.

21 For the story and the poem (51 vss.) see *Aghānī*, xiv, 20–26, *Dīwān*, 96–104. The sheep of a neighbour escaped, ate some vegetables, entered the poet's house, ate some manuscripts with poems and dictations, and left.

51 Abū Tammām ibn Aws al-Ṭāʾī[1]

Abū l-Aswad al-Mawṣilī told me: Al-Ḥasan ibn Rajāʾ al-Ḍaḥḥāk[2] said: "We were with al-Muʿtaṣim, the Commander of the Believers, in al-Raqqah, when Abū Tammām arrived. I was sitting in my river boat. He began to recite poetry to me, while turning to the servants and slaves ‖ who were standing in attendance, [283]
joking with them and touching them (al-Ṭāʾī was a great ‖ prankster and jester). {134}
I said to him, 'I say, Ṭāʾī! I thought you were on your way to the Commander of the Believers, knowing that you are such an excellent poet! Now look: if you are in his presence, do not jest with a servant or even turn to him, for the Caliph is extremely jealous. If he finds you doing anything like that, I cannot be sure

1 Abū Tammām Ḥabīb ibn Aws (d. 231/845, only c. 40 years old), major poet and anthologist, born in Syria, of the tribe of Ṭayyiʾ and therefore sometimes called simply al-Ṭāʾī (although some allege this affiliation was fabricated and that his father was a Christian). He excelled in all the major genres and became famous especially for his panegyrics and elegies. His often excessive use of *badīʿ*, including paronomasia (*jinās*), antithesis (*ṭibāq*), and complex metaphors (*istiʿārah*), made him a controversial poet, and it was his style that inspired Ibn al-Muʿtazz to write his seminal treatise on tropes and figures of speech, *Kitāb al-badīʿ*; see also his epistle on the good and bad qualities of Abū Tammām's poetry (quoted in al-Marzubānī, *Muwashshaḥ*, 470–490). Abū Tammām is often contrasted with his younger contemporary al-Buḥturī (see below, § 107), whose style is considered to be more "natural" (*maṭbūʿ*). The literary critic al-Āmidī (d. 371/981) wrote a voluminous book comparing the two, *al-Muwāzanah bayna shiʿr Abī Tammām wa-l-Buḥturī*. Several commentaries on his *Dīwān* have been preserved, such as those by Abū Bakr al-Ṣūlī and al-Khaṭīb al-Tibrīzī. There are several modern editions of the *Dīwān* (I refer to the one in four volumes by Muḥammad ʿAbduh ʿAzzām, with al-Khaṭīb al-Tibrīzī's commentary). Abū Tammām compiled several anthologies of mostly pre-Islamic and early Islamic poetry. Of these his *al-Ḥamāsah* ("zeal, ardour, heroism", after the first and longest section) became extremely popular; pieces from it are frequently quoted and many commentaries were written, among them those by al-Marzūqī and al-Khaṭīb al-Tibrīzī. It became the model for numerous thematically arranged anthologies also called al-*Ḥamāsah*. Abū Tammām has no entry in Ibn Qutaybah's *al-Shiʿr* (although he is mentioned several times as "al-Ṭāʾī"), but there are several books about him, among them al-Ṣūlī's *Akhbār Abī Tammām*, and he has entries in *Aghānī*, xvi, 382–399; al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, iv, 364–375; al-Marzubānī, *Muwashshaḥ*, 464–505; Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, i, 528–529; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, ix, 157–164; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh*, xii, 16–34; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, ii, 11–26; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xi, 292–299; Ibn Faḍl Allāh, *Masālik* (ed. al-Jubūrī), xiv, 406–438. See *GAS*, ii, 66–72, 551–558; *EI2*, i, 153–155, "Abū Tammām" (H. Ritter); *EI3*, "Abū Tammām" (Beatrice Gruendler); Cooperson & Toorawa (eds), *Arabic Literary Culture, 500–925*, 33–52, "Abu Tammam" (Margaret Larkin); *EAL*, 47–49 (J.S. Meisami); S.P. Stetkevych, *Abū Tammām and the Poetics of the ʿAbbāsid Age*.

2 More correctly, al-Ḥasan ibn Rajāʾ ibn Abī l-Ḍaḥḥāk al-Kātib al-Jarjarāʾī (d. 244/858–859), poet, state secretary, governor, and patron of Abū Tammām. See al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xii, 9–11. On his father see above, § 21.

that he won't tell each of his servants to buffet your ears a hundred times!' 'In that case,' said Abū Tammām, 'I shall leave with purses filled with buffetings' ".

'Abd al-Ṣamad the transmitter told me: Muḥammad ibn Ḥassān al-Ḍabbī told me:[3] "I travelled from Syria to Iraq together with Abū Tammām. In my boat there was an astrologer whom I had taken with me on my expedition. Al-Ṭā'ī kept pestering him, beating him about and tearing his clothes. I kept reproaching and reproving him. 'Damn you,' I said, 'This man travels with us and we must respect him. Why are you doing these things? Noble people do not behave like this, nor do well-educated people.' But he replied, saying, 'That motherfucker,[4] if he were really an astrologer and knew as much as he claimed, he would not have boarded this boat together with us, with me beating and molesting him.' "

Abū l-Ghuṣn Muḥammad ibn Qudāmah told me:[5] "I visited Ḥabīb ibn Aws in Qazwīn. He was almost invisible, all but drowning amidst a mass of notebooks. As a result I stood there for some time, while he did not notice me. Then he raised his head, he looked at me and greeted me. 'Abū Tammām!' I said, 'What a lot of books you are reading! You must be addicted to studying, if you can put up with all this!' He replied, 'I swear to God, I have no other close friend nor any delight apart from them. If I study them carefully I shall be worthy of being
[284] a good poet.' ‖ I saw two sheafs of paper, one on his right and one on his left. He was engrossed in studying them, setting them apart from the other books. I asked him, 'What are these? Because I see you care about them more strongly than the rest.' He answered, 'The one on my right is al-Lāt, the one on my left is al-'Uzzā. I have venerated them for twenty years.'[6] The one on his right was the poetry of Muslim ibn al-Walīd 'Slain-by-the-Fair' and on his left hand was the poetry of Abū Nuwās."

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3 Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Ḥassān al-Ḍabbī was a philologist, poet, and tutor to several sons of al-Ma'mūn, see Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-udabā'*, xviii, 119–121.

4 He uses a variant of the common expression explained above, p. 37.

5 Compare the shorter version in al-Ṣūlī, *Akhbār Abī Tammām* ('Asākir et al.), 173, (Gruendler), 194–195, where the narrator is Aḥmad ibn Abī Ṭāhir.

6 Al-Lāt and al-'Uzzā are two female deities venerated in pre-Islamic Arabia; see Q al-Najm 53:19–20: *Have you considered al-Lāt and al-'Uzzā, and Manāt, the third, the other?* In al-Ṣūlī's version the poet says "… whom I have venerated for thirty years instead of God" (a statement strongly condemned by al-Ṣūlī). Little did Abū Tammām suspect that some four centuries later he himself would be revered in a similar fashion. The important literary critic Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Ibn al-Athīr (d. 637/1239) wrote in his *al-Mathal al-sā'ir* (iii, 226): "As for me, I only need the poetry of Abū Tammām Ḥabīb ibn Aws, of Abū 'Ubādah al-Walīd [al-Buḥturī, see below, §107] and Abū l-Ṭayyib al-Mutanabbī [d. 354/965]: these three are the al-Lāt, the al-'Uzzā, and the Manāt of poetry."

A charming poem by him (but all his poetry is good)[7] is his poem with rhyme letter D on al-Maʾmūn, beginning:[8]

The veil has been lifted: now kindle the fire or put it out![9]

This poem is "more famous than the piebald horse",[10] as are all the poems by him that we shall mention here, while limiting ourselves to quoting only the openings, such as:

By these abodes' father! They are truly sorrows …[11]

and

She let her tears flow, fearing the departure on the morrow …[12]

and

When will you stop thinking of that woman of the tribe of Dhuhl?[13]

and

He heard about the separation, being deluded indeed …[14]

---

7 This contradicts his severe criticism of some verses in *al-Badīʿ* and the epistle quoted in al-Marzubānī's *Muwashshaḥ*; below he also qualifies his praise.

8 Abū Tammām, *Dīwān*, ii, 43–58 (46 vss.).

9 Al-Khaṭīb al-Tibrīzī's commentary explains: "The secret [of my love] is out; now, woman, blame me or leave it!"

10 For this saying see e.g. al-Maydānī, *Majmaʿ*, i, 478 and al-Thaʿālibī, *Thimār*, 360 (who explains that a commander would ride a piebald horse to be more conspicuous in battle).

11 Abū Tammām, *Dīwān*, iii, 323, opening hemistich of a poem (48 vss.) in praise of Caliph al-Wāthiq. Personifying the abandoned abodes while addressing them is common, but Abū Tammām takes it a step further by attributing a father to them with the use of the common oath formula.

12 Abū Tammām, *Dīwān*, ii, 22, opening hemistich of a poem (55 vss.) in praise of Abū Saʿīd Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf al-Thaghrī al-Ṭāʾī (d. 236/851), a general, dedicatee of many poems by Abū Tammām.

13 Abū Tammām, *Dīwān*, iii, 112, opening hemistich of a poem (60 vss.) in praise of Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Malik al-Zayyāt (see above, p. 383).

14 Abū Tammām, *Dīwān*, iii, 165, opening hemistich of a poem (53 vss.) in praise of Isḥāq ibn Ibrāhīm al-Muṣʿabī (d. 235/849), military governor and patron of Abū Tammām.

and

Blackened traces—he stopped at them and said, "Greetings!" …[15]

[285] and

Her furtive glances were replaced by tears …[16]

and

Truth shines bright, swords are bared …[17]

and

The sword brings truer tidings than do writings …[18]

and

Grey hair has woven him a veil, to be cast on him …[19]

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15 Abū Tammām, *Dīwān*, iii, 150, opening hemistich of a poem (54 vss.) in praise of al-Maʾmūn. For an English translation and study, see S.P. Stetkevych, *Abū Tammām*, 114–134. *Dimanʾ* (pl. of *dimnah*) strictly means "pieces, or traces, of dung (of camels or sheep)"; Jaroslav Stetkevych ("Toward an Arabic Elegiac Lexicon", 74–88) discusses *dimnah* as one of "the seven words of the *nasīb*". Starting the translation with "Bits of dung" would certainly be an arresting opening, but I chose to follow Suzanne Stetkevych ("He alighted at a blackened trace …"). According to al-Āmidī (*Muwāzanah*, i, 417) "This first hemistich is extremely good, excellent, sound, and sweet."

16 Abū Tammām, *Dīwān*, iii, 308, opening hemistich of a poem (28 vss.) in praise of Aḥmad Ibn Abī Duwād (d. 240/854), Muʿtazilite Chief Judge under al-Maʾmūn. *Īmāḍ* (often used for the flashing of lightning) here refers to "glancing furtively" or (according to al-Āmidī, *Muwāzanah*, i, 7) to laughing and showing gleaming teeth.

17 Abū Tammām, *Dīwān*, iii, 198, opening hemistich of a poem (61 vss.) in praise of al-Muʿtaṣim. For an English translation and study, see S.P. Stetkevych, *Abū Tammām*, 212–231.

18 Abū Tammām, *Dīwān*, i, 40, opening hemistich of a poem (71 vss.) in praise of al-Muʿtaṣim. It is the poet's most famous ode. For English translations and studies see S.P. Stetkevych, *Abū Tammām*, 187–211, Bray, "Al-Muʿtaṣim's Bridge of Toil"; for another English translation see Arberry, *Arabic Poetry*, 50–62; a partial translation (vss. 1–40) by A.F.L. B[eeston] in Ashtiany et al. (eds.), *ʿAbbasid Belles-Lettres*, 159–161, reproduced in Irwin, *Nights and Horses and the Desert*, 132–134. For a study of the poem see also Badawi, "The Function of Rhetoric".

19 Abū Tammām, *Dīwān*, iv, 470, opening hemistich of a poem (26 vss.) reproaching ʿAyyāsh ibn Lahīʿah al-Ḥaḍramī, a tax collector in Egypt, Abū Tammām's first patron.

and

You have been rough to him, sister of the Banū Khushayn! …[20]

and

Take away the tears of your eyes, woman, from my resolution! …[21] {135}

and

Day of parting! You were created lengthy …[22]

[and

Enough! Be ashamed! You have been overly excessive!][23]

But if we were to quote the openings of his fine poems exhaustively, this would take up a substantial part of this book, even if we gave only one hemistich of each, because the man composed a lot of poetry. It is said that there are six hundred longer poems and eight hundred shorter pieces.[24] Most of it ‖ is excellent [286] and his inferior verse is merely that part of which only the wording is abstruse. It is not that his verse is ever devoid of subtle motifs or numerous beauties and

20 Abū Tammām, *Dīwān*, iii, 297, opening hemistich of a poem (37 vss.) in praise of Isḥāq ibn Ibrāhīm al-Muṣʿabī. The Banū Khushayn are a tribe of the Southern Arabs. The verse has been condemned for its forced punning (*khashunti*, "you have been rough" / *Khushayn*): "This does not look like how women are addressed in love poetry; his love of paronomasia (*tajnīs*) drove him to this, but it is more fitting to be invective on women" (al-Marzubānī, *Muwashshaḥ*, 475, cf. 466, 497); "This is extremely ugly, feeble, and base" (al-Āmidī, *Muwāzanah*, i, 269).

21 Abū Tammām, *Dīwān*, ii, 336, opening hemistich of a poem (30 vss.) in praise of Mahdī ibn Aṣram, a commander involved in fighting Bābak, as mentioned in al-Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh*, ii, 565 (tr. *The Works*, 1230). The poet says that the woman's tears distract him from more weighty matters (he has resolved to travel, see al-Āmidī, *Muwāzanah*, ii, 9).

22 Abū Tammām, *Dīwān*, iii, 66, opening hemistich of a poem (30 vss.) in praise of Nūḥ ibn ʿAmr al-Saksakī, a patron of the poet.

23 The parenthesis is taken from the *Mukhtaṣar* (ed. Farrāj, Appendix, 441). See Abū Tammām, *Dīwān*, i, 20, opening hemistich of a poem (30 vss.) in praise of Muḥammad ibn Ḥassān al-Ḍabbī.

24 I translate *qaṣīdah* as "longer poem" and *qiṭʿah* as "shorter piece (or poem)". The published *Dīwān* (ed. ʿAzzām) contains 490 poems (long or short), not counting 11 doubtful poems given as an appendix.

novelties. Al-Buḥturī, when asked about Abū Tammām and himself, was fair-minded:[25] "His good poetry", he said, "is better than my good poetry, but my bad poetry is better than his bad poetry." And in fact al-Buḥturī's diction is almost never rough: his words sound sweet like honey; but he does not measure up by a long shot to al-Ṭā'ī in his skill with ideas and embellishments: he would drown in the other's sea. Al-Buḥturī, it is true, composed numerous motifs, but most of them are taken from Abū Tammām, stolen from his poetry.

Abū Tammām said:[26]

You who are wearing a robe of gracefulness: wear it out!
For you are the wearer most entitled to wear it.
God, who gave it to you, only gave it
when He had scorned His full moon and His sun.
When a young gazelle lets his glances roam
murderously, decency demands his detention.
And I am the one who gave him tender love,
I embraced him, and I was the first to win his intimacy.
I planted him, but if I reaped his fruits,
I was not the first reaper from his planting.
Your master, O my master, is a man of love-sickness
and passion, today, and yesterday![27]

He also said:[28]

Muḥammad ibn Ḥumayd's remains have decayed, but the water
of noble deeds has been poured out since his blood was poured out.[29]

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25 Also in al-Ṣūlī, *Akhbār Abī Tammām* (ed. 'Asākir et al.), 67, (ed. & tr. Gruendler) 76–77 and Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān*, i, 18 (in Ḥamzah al-Iṣbahānī's commentary). In the version in *Aghānī*, xxi, 39 al-Buḥturī says that Abū Tammām's good poetry is better than his own good poetry, and his own mediocre and bad poetry better than Abū Tammām's mediocre and bad poetry.

26 Abū Tammām, *Dīwān*, iv, 219 (with an additional final verse), a love poem on an unknown loved one.

27 The final verse in the *Dīwān* is: "Fatally ill, he will give up the ghost, but he has become | too weak to give up the ghost!"

28 Abū Tammām, *Dīwān*, iv, 137, one of his several elegies on the death of Muḥammad ibn Ḥumayd al-Ṭūsī, a general of al-Ma'mūn, killed in 214/829 fighting against Bābak. Vss. 1, 3–6 are quoted in Ibn Dāwūd, *Zahrah*, 525–526; al-Ḥuṣrī, *Zahr*, 721–722; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, iii, 29 (who finds it "one of the most beautiful, subtle, and original elegies").

29 Al-Āmidī, *Muwāzanah*, iii, 463 finds the image of "pouring out the water of noble deeds"

The hand and mouth of Time became aware of the Banū Nabhān
(having wreaked havoc among them), on the day he was buried.
I saw him, sitting with his sword-strap round his body,[30]
like a full moon from whose face the darkness was cleared,
In a meadow surrounded by flowers, which, when I observed them,
I was certain were his benefactions.
I said, while a flood of tears of sorrow and joy,
that day, moistened my cheeks:
"Did you not die, my soul-brother, some time ago?"
He replied to me, "One does not die if one's generosity has not died".[31]

These are the reports on Abū Tammām.

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very ugly (*qabīḥ jiddan*), but al-Thaʿālibī (*Thimār*, 565) admires the metaphorical use of water (*mā'*) in this and similar verses by Abū Tammām.

30 The verb *iḥtabā* means "sitting on the ground with tucked-up knees, with a garment (or sword-strap, as here) wrapped round oneself for support" (for an even longer description see Lane, *Lexicon*, *ḤBW*).

31 Quoted by al-Āmidī (*Muwāzanah*, i, 120, with "twin-brother of generosity", *shaqīq al-jūd*, instead of *shaqīq al-nafs*), who denies that this motif was stolen from a poem by al-ʿAttābī.

[287] **52 Abū l-ʿAmaythal**[1]

Ibn Abī Shubrumah told me:[2] Abū l-ʿAmaythal entered into the presence of Ṭāhir ibn al-Ḥusayn, who was holding an audience. He kissed his hand, upon which Ṭāhir said, "You've got a very rough moustache, Abū l-ʿAmaythal!" "Emir!" replied Abū l-ʿAmaythal, "The hedgehog's spines cannot harm the lion's claws!" Ṭāhir laughed and said, "I like that remark better than your poem!" He
{136} gave him one thousand dirhams ‖ for his poem and three thousand for the remark.

Muḥammad ibn Abī Yūnus told me: Abū l-ʿAmaythal was one of Ṭāhir's court poets, who gave him precedence and who preferred him. But he got angry with him for some reason and was unfriendly to him. Then Abū l-ʿAmaythal said,[3]

I shall leave this court as long as his permission to enter
is as I see it is, until it is made a little easier.[4]
When, one day, I shall not find a means to get permission
I'll find some way of abandoning a visit.

1 ʿAbd Allāh ibn Khulayd, known as Abū l-ʿAmaythal (d. 240/854), was a philologist and minor poet originally from al-Rayy. He is quoted in various sources but has no entries in other books on poets. He was, however, "the poet of the Ṭāhirids" (also serving as their state secretary and tutor to their sons) and he interceded with ʿAbd Allāh ibn Ṭāhir on behalf of Abū Tammām (al-Ṣūlī, *Akhbār Abī Tammām*, ed. ʿAsākir et al., 212–213, 223–226, ed. & tr. Gruendler, 238–241, 252–255, *Aghānī*, xvi, 395–396). He wrote or compiled two books on poetry, which are not preserved, and a treatise on homonyms, which survives. Entries on him are in Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, i, 134–135; Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ* (ed. ʿAbbās), 1518–1519 (not in ed. al-Rifāʿī); al-Qifṭī, *Inbāh*, iv, 149 (as ʿAbd Allah ibn Khālid); Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, iii, 89–91; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xvii, 160–161. See also *EI2*, *Suppl.*, 15, "Abu 'l-ʿAmaythal"; *EI3*, "Abū l-ʿAmaythal" (Reinhard Weipert); *GAS*, xviii, 189, xvi, 362.

2 Versions of this anecdote are in many sources, among them al-Shābushtī, *Diyārāt* (ed. ʿAwwād) 140, (ed. & tr. Kilpatrick), 184–185; al-Tawḥīdī, *Baṣāʾir*, iv, 123; Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, i, 135; al-Thaʿālibī, *Thimār*, 384; al-Rāghib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, i, 190; Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ* (ed. ʿAbbās), 1519; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, iii, 90; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xvii, 161.

3 Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, i, 135; al-Rāghib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, i, 131; Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ* (ed. ʿAbbās), 1518; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, iii, 89–91; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xvii, 160–161; attributed to "Ḥabīb al-Ṭāʾī" (viz., Abū Tammām) in Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, i, 74 (tr. Boullata, i, 55); attributed to Muḥammad ibn Hishām al-Sidrī in al-Marzubānī, *Muʿjam*, 367; anonymously in (ps.-)al-Jāḥiẓ, *al-Ḥijāb* (*Rasāʾil*, ii, 60); Ibn Qutaybah, *ʿUyūn*, i, 85; al-Bayhaqī, *Maḥāsin*, 163; and al-ʿAskarī, *Dīwān al-maʿānī*, i, 163.

4 The text and the editions have *ḥattā talīna*, also *Maḥāsin*. Eghbal suggests reading *ḥattā yalīna* (as in *Dīwān al-maʿānī*); all other sources have *ḥattā yakhiffa*.

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Then Ṭāhir turned to him again and remained his benefactor as long as he lived. Abū l-ʿAmaythal composed a fine verse on al-Faḍl ibn Sahl and his brother al-Ḥasan ibn Sahl, in which he mentioned both:[5]

> The shapes of resolution's face, between the two,
> are like a protective shade where sun and moon meet.

He also said:

> He was unjust (*jāra*), I swear to God, to his protégé (*jār*),
> though God has commended the protégé to him![6]
> How much longer, Sire, will you mingle
> for me good fortune with bad fortune?
> Ah, who has ever seen before, among all who saw,
> a dinar in the palm of a dinar?[7]

One notices the nimbleness of the metre of these verses.

5 Al-Faḍl ibn Sahl ibn Zadhānfarūkh served as vizier under al-Maʾmūn; he was murdered in 202/818, perhaps with the connivance of the Caliph (see also above, p. 383 note 8). His brother al-Ḥasan (d. 236/850–851) retired from service after al-Faḍl's death. The marriage of his daughter Būrān to al-Maʾmūn in 210/825 became a much-celebrated event. This verse and the following three verses are not found elsewhere.

6 Q al-Nisāʾ 4:36: *Be kind to parents, close relatives, orphans, the needy, the protégé* (jār) *who is related, the protégé who is a stranger* (…). The word *jār* is often translated as "neighbour" but implies protection.

7 The sense is not entirely clear. Dīnār occurs as a personal name, so the poet may refer to his beloved, as suggested by Abeer al-Abbasi (personal communication).

[288] **53 Abū ʿUyaynah ibn Muḥammad ibn Abī ʿUyaynah al-Muhallabī[1]**

He is a descendant of al-Muhallab ibn Abī Ṣufrah.[2] The Muhallabids say that Abū ʿUyaynah is a proper name.[3] An old man belonging to them said, "Everyone of the Muhallabids who is called Abū ʿUyaynah has the teknonym Abū l-Minhāl." Likewise, the Banū Sadūs say that Abū Ruhm is a proper name; this is common among them.

Ibrāhīm ibn Saʿīd told me: Abū Hāshim al-ʿAbdī informed me that Abū ʿUyaynah ibn Muḥammad ibn Abī ʿUyaynah is the one who lampooned his paternal uncle Khālid ibn Yazīd ibn Ḥātim al-Muhallabī;[4] his brother ʿAbd Allāh is the one who was in the entourage of Ṭāhir ibn al-Ḥusayn, but he became displeased with him and lampooned him. And his brother Dāwūd ibn Muḥammad is the one who said on him and the family of Sulaymān ibn ʿAlī:[5]

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1 Abū l-Minhāl Abū ʿUyaynah ibn Muḥammad ibn Abī ʿUyaynah, great-grandson of al-Muhallab; poet from Basra, also active in Jurjān and Kufa; year of death unknown; known for his love poetry on Dunyā (real name Fāṭimah bint ʿUmar ibn Ḥafṣ ibn ʿUthmān, also one of the Muhallabids). Though now considered a minor poet, Ibn al-Muʿtazz calls him one of the four pre-eminent "naturally gifted poets" (see below, p. 421). He has entries in Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 875–878 (in the entry of his older brother ʿAbd Allāh); *Aghānī*, xx, 74–118; al-Marzubānī, *Muʿjam*, 109–111. See *GAS*, ii, 605–606; *EI2*, iii, 694, "Ibn Abī ʿUyayna" (A. Ghédira), on him and his brother Abū Jaʿfar ʿAbd Allāh ibn Muḥammad. On their grandfather, Abū l-Minhāl Muḥammad ibn ʿUyaynah, see *EI2*, vii, 395 (Ch. Pellat). The names have caused considerable confusion, cleared up by Ameur Ghédira (Muḥammad ʿĀmir Ghadīrah), "Deux poètes", idem, "Le «Dîwân»" d'Ibn Abî ʿUyayna" (which contains the collected poetry of the two brothers).

2 Al-Muhallab ibn Abī Ṣufrah (d. 82/702 or 83/703) was an army commander during the early Islamic conquests and the founder of an influential family; see *EI2*, vii, 357, "al-Muhallab b. Abī Ṣufra" (P. Crone) and see the references above, at p. 54.

3 An *ism*, proper name, not a *kunyah* (teknonym or nickname); similarly, Abū Bakr normally counts as a proper name.

4 On his genealogy (and of the other Muhallabīs), see the tables in Ghédira, "Deux poètes", 155 and "Le «Dîwân»", 115. His father Abū Khālid Yazīd has an entry below, § 65.

5 Perhaps the descendants of the Abbasid prince Sulaymān ibn ʿAlī ibn ʿAbd Allāh (d. 142/759) are meant, but he is not the only Abbasid called Sulaymān ibn ʿAlī. The verses are attributed to "a certain Muhallabid" in Abū Tammām, *Ḥamāsah* (al-Marzūqī, *Sharḥ*, 152); attributed to ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Abū l-Anwār al-Muhallabī in al-Qālī, *Dhayl al-Amālī*, 72; attributed to Diʿbil in al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Bukhalā'*, 101 and Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh*, xvii, 273; anonymously in al-Mubarrad, *Kāmil*, ii, 2; Ibn Qutaybah, *ʿUyūn*, ii, 33; Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, vi, 187; al-Dīnawarī, *Mujālasah*, vii, 335; al-Rāghib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, i, 410 (vs. 1). In al-Ibshīhī, *Mustaṭraf*, i, 174 vs. 1 is jumbled together with verses by al-Akhṭal but ascribed to Jarīr (translation in van Gelder, *Classical Arabic Literature*, 312).

People who, when they are eating, speak softly
and secure the bolts on the door of the house.
Their neighbour may not take a firebrand from their fire
but no hand is held back from the neighbour's inviolability.[6]

[Abū Tammām quoted these two verses as being by someone of the Muhallabids but he did not mention Abū ʿUyaynah by name; perhaps it is him.][7]

All three are sons of Muḥammad and are poets. Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān told me: Muḥammad ibn al-Muẓaffar informed me that Abū ʿUyaynah entered into the presence of al-Maʾmūn one day, who said to him, "Abū ʿUyaynah, you have lampooned your uncle with a thousand verses without once making insinuations about his womenfolk or overstepping the limit, except in one verse, which I wish you had not composed!" The poet asked, "Which one is it, Commander of the Believers?" "It is this verse:[8]

Truly, I am not hurting you above how you hurt me,
but I shall certainly set my wolf upon your sheep!"

Abū ʿUyaynah replied, "But with those sheep I meant only his sons!" And al- [289]
Maʾmūn was reassured.[9]

He also said on Khālid:[10]

Say openly what you used to keep secret,
speak out frankly, without secrets:
There is no solace for this matter, {137}
and fortitude has overcome solace.
What was concealed has now been revealed,
the cover has been lifted:
Khālid has imposed Jurjān on me
iniquitously, inimically!

6 This "inviolability" (*ḥurmah*) probably refers to the neighbour's womenfolk.

7 The parenthesis is taken from the *Mukhtaṣar* (ed. Farrāj, Appendix, 442).

8 See *Aghānī*, xx, 108–109 and Ghédira, "Le «Dîwân»", 111 (the final verses of a poem of 18 vss. lampooning his uncle Khālid).

9 The Caliph could, however, have countered that *niʿāj*, even less ambiguously than English "sheep", refers to "ewes".

10 Ghédira, "Le «Dîwân»", 113; vss. 6–7 in Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 876–877; vs. 6 (with three more vss.) in *Aghānī*, xx, 116; vss. 6–7 (with another vs.) in al-Marzubānī, *Muʿjam*, 110. On the poet's unhappy time with Khālid in Jurjān (Persian Gurgān, a region at the South-East corner of the Caspian Sea), see Ghédira. "Deux poètes", 171–172.

It was an undertaking from which I gained
nothing but distress.
Were it not for his father,
Khālid and a dog would be equal.
If he grew to the extent that he dwindles,
he would reach the sky.

He also said:[11]

Ḥafṣ, hand it to your friend, hand him
a cup that will invigorate him!
With unmixed wine that will make its drinkers
like a gazelle released from its shackle.
The effeminate Khālid was distressed
when I saw through him.[12]

It is a very long poem. Abū ʿUyaynah's poetry is purer than wine; it has no flaws, not a single inferior verse. He also said:[13]

Dāwūd is praiseworthy, you are to be blamed:
how strange is that, since you are of one stock!
But it happens that a piece of wood is split: a mosque
gets one half, the rest goes into a privy of Jews.
The privy is all yours, the mosque for that other one:
what a difference there is between defecation and prostration!
[290] Dāwūd opens every locked door
with the bounty of his hand; but you are an iron lock.

11 Ghédira, "Le «Dîwân»", 101 (vss. 1–2, 5 of a piece of 13 vss.), see *Aghānī*, xx, 112–113. The identity of the drinking companion, Ḥafṣ, is unclear.

12 The MS and the editions have *waqaʿtu ʿalā nimāṭih*, "I fell on his carpet", which does not seem to make sense, and I follow *Aghānī* in reading *waqaʿtu ʿalā qimāṭih*, an idiom meaning "I saw through him".

13 Ghédira, "Le «Dîwân»", 107, being vss. 6–9 of a piece of 9 vss. with invective on Qabīṣah ibn Rawḥ ibn Ḥātim al-Muhallabī and praise of Dāwūd ibn Yazīd (*Aghānī* wrongly has Mazyad) ibn Ḥātim al-Muhallabī (on whom see above, p. 220); see Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 868; *Aghānī*, xx, 105–106; al-Marzubānī, *Muʿjam*, 110; al-ʿAskarī, *Dīwān al-maʿānī*, i, 191; al-Rāghib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, i, 229. The poem is also attributed to Bashshār (see his *Dīwān*, iii, 106), but see Ghédira, "Deux poètes", 177.

Abū ʿUyaynah is one of the four naturally gifted poets; no one more natural than they can be found in pre-Islamic or Islamic times: they are Bashshār, Abū l-ʿAtāhiyah, al-Sayyid, and Abū ʿUyaynah.[14]

Khalaf ibn Isḥāq al-Kūfī told me: a certain scholar told me that a man from Basra longed to go and visit Dāwūd ibn Yazīd ibn Ḥātim ibn Qabīṣah ibn al-Muhallab in al-Sind, where he was its governor. He was able to solicit some letters to be written for him[15] by his friends and relatives. Then he went to ʿAbd Allāh ibn Muḥammad, Abū ʿUyaynah's brother. "Dear Sir," he said, "could you write for me a letter to your cousin, Dāwūd ibn Yazīd?" ʿAbd Allāh wrote a nice letter and gave it to him, saying, "When you take the letters you have to him and he has read them, [hand him also my letter." When he arrived and gave Dāwūd the letters, he read them and][16] the man said, "May God make you prosper! I also have with me a letter for you from Abū Jaʿfar ʿAbd Allāh ibn Muḥammad." The governor said, "Hand me that letter! Why have you saved it for last?" "That is what he told me to do." He gave him the letter. Dāwūd broke the seal and found the following inside:[17]

A man taken to you
overseas, by some sea-ship,
Tossed by the winds that move him forward,
but at times holding him back, not moving,
While he sees death whenever a storm wind
blows, with fear and terror:
He surely deserves to be provided by you
with letters[18] that are a safeguard from poverty.

Dāwūd said, "You must indeed return to him a rich man!" He gave him one thousand dinars and five thousand dirhams.

14 This echoes al-Jāḥiẓ (*Bayān*, i, 50): "The naturally gifted poets among the moderns (*al-muwalladūn*) are Bashshār al-ʿUqaylī, al-Sayyid al-Ḥimyarī, Abū l-ʿAtāhiyah, and Ibn Abī ʿUyaynah."

15 The MS seems to have *fa-tanajjara lahū kutuban*; Farrāj reads the first word as *fa-takhayyara* ("he chose") whereas I tentatively read *fa-tanajjaza*.

16 The parenthesis added by Farrāj.

17 Ghédira, "Le «Dîwân»", 126; see al-Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān*, iv, 75; attributed to Ibrāhīm ibn al-ʿAbbās al-Ṣūlī in al-Nashshābī, *Mudhākarah*, 183.

18 Farrāj follows the MS, reading *kunta l-amāna*, whereas I prefer to read *kutba l-amāni*, as in *Bayān* and *Mudhākarah*.

[291] ʿAbd Allāh said, reproaching Ṭāhir:[19]

{138} O Ambidextrous One! What is a thing that, despite
protracted staying, means being turned away and falling short?[20]
And what is a luminous meteor that is hurt by worries
about your fire,[21] until it has no light left?

He also said,[22]

O Ambidextrous One! Reproach
cures some breasts and incites other breasts.
I used to think that not to reproach
is better and more likely to avoid harm,
Until I came to believe that you believe
that I am happy with being despicable.

After that he lampooned him:[23]

Ṭāhir is nothing but dust that moves
with the wind of al-Faḍl ibn Yaḥyā, and then passes.[24]
It is all very useful with al-Faḍl's wind,
but is bad with al-Faḍl when it is bad or pleasant.

19 Ghédira, "Le «Dîwân»", 122; see Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 873.

20 Ṭāhir was called Dhū l-Yamīnayn, "the one with two right hands". The text of the MS is corrupt but even when following Ibn Qutaybah's reading the interpretation of the two verses remains somewhat unclear. It seems the poet is describing himself as waiting in vain for his patron's promise to be fulfilled.

21 Instead of *bi-nārika*, one should perhaps read, with Ibn Qutaybah, *bi-bābika*, "at your door".

22 Ghédira, "Le «Dîwân»", 124, being vss. 1–3 of a poem of 23 vss.; see al-Mubarrad, *Kāmil*, ii, 58–59, Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 873. Farrāj emends the opening vocative particle *Yā* to *A-yā*, which is possible but unnecessary, as the metre (*mutaqārib*) often shows elision (*kharm*) of the first syllable in the opening line.

23 Ghédira, "Le «Dîwân»", 128, Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 874.

24 Instead of *safātun* ("dust"), Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr* has *shifāhun* ("lips"), which does not fit the context, and instead of al-Faḍl ibn Yaḥyā (al-Barmakī), it has al-Faḍl ibn Sahl, al-Maʾmūn's vizier, which is no doubt correct (see Ghédira, "Deux poètes", 164). The following verse is somewhat obscure. Ghédira remarks that the poet reproaches Ṭāhir for being but a pale reflection of al-Faḍl ibn Sahl and that the epigram also hints at a certain hostility towards the vizier.

[Then he left him and said,[25]

Now there's only fortitude and submission to God and His pleasure,
when an event occurs that I do not wish,
When we return safe and sound with noble
souls that hoped but whose hopes were dashed.]

25 The parenthesis is taken from the *Mukhtaṣar* (ed. Farrāj, Appendix, 442). See Ghédira, "Le «Dîwân»", 138 (5 vss.); Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 874; al-Mubarrad, *Kāmil*, ii, 54. The verses are attributed to an unnamed Bedouin woman lamenting her son in Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, ii, 259.

54 Isḥāq ibn Khalaf[1]

Al-Mubarrad told me: Abū ʿIṣmah told me: Isḥāq ibn Khalaf was one of those scoundrels who carry knives and make a show of their toughness at taking lashes. Someone other than al-Mubarrad informed me that he stabbed a young man of the Banū Nahshal who live in Mecca and that he was imprisoned for that reason. He stayed in prison until his death.[2] Among what we have memorised and selected are these verses describing a horse:[3]

So often have you given it a taste of death, yet it always survived!
If it could, its mouth would complain to you.
[292] At every hair growing on its body
there is a mark, as a decoration, made by a sharp sword.
It is as if his gaze is attached to the sky
and as if he is bridled to the ties of the Milky Way.

[He also said,[4]

They tell me Marw is a remote town,
but Marw is not remote if Ibn Ṭāhir is there.
More remote than Marw are men I see
who are present with us but whose boons are absent.
Visiting them hoping for benefits
or visiting the dead: it amounts to the same!

Isḥāq ibn Khalaf composed many poems, among them panegyrics on caliphs, lampoons, poems on wine and love; but there was some restraint in him.]

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1 Isḥāq ibn Khalaf, also known as Ibn al-Ṭabīb al-Ṭunbūrī (d. c. 230/845), was a poet and entertainer (on the musical instrument called *ṭunbūr* see above, p. 146). Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, ii, 404, lists Isḥāq ibn Khalaf (with Bashshār, Ibn al-Sayābah, Salm al-Khāsir, and others) among crypto-Manichaeans. He has an entry in Ibn Shākir, *Fawāt*, i, 163–164; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, viii, 411–412. Very little poetry by him has been preserved. In al-Mubarrad, *Kāmil*, ii, 42 he is called Isḥāq ibn Khalaf al-Bahrānī (after the tribe Bahrāʾ, according to al-Samʿānī *Ansāb*, i, 420). In al-Ḥuṣrī, *Zahr*, 362 the *nisbah* is given as al-Nahrawānī.

2 The biographies given by Ibn Shākir and al-Ṣafadī suggest that he got out of prison and became a panegyrist.

3 The horse belonged to Abū Dulaf, see Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, i, 161 (anonymously, 6 vss.; cf. Boullata's translation, 113); al-Ḥuṣrī, *Zahr*, 362 (5 vss.); al-Nashshābī, *Mudhākarah*, 257 (5 vss.); vs. 1 (with different rhyme word) in al-Khālidiyyān, *Ashbāh*, i, 142 (anonymously).

4 The parenthesis is taken from the *Mukhtaṣar* (ed. Farrāj, Appendix, 442–443). The verses are not found in other sources.

On Ibn Kūshīdh al-Iṣfahānī he said:[5]

Are you happy being buggered, though being a master,
but not happy that a servant fornicates?
As if his copulating with you were licit,
but fucking someone other than you marked as taboo!
It's like a mule that is saddled willingly
but will not let a bridle choke it.
When a servant buggers his master,
it is only the master who is to be blamed.

He also said:[6]

You have adulterated your union with me!
So much that when I wrote my letter
You said, "Leaving you is the right thing."
But leaving is not the right thing.
Don't you see my passion for you?
Will you not pity my lamenting?
Have you not seen that it is my death,
in love, with reproach?

On grey hair he said:[7]

Some try to trick grey hair, always taking care of it
by now dyeing it, now plucking it.
But whatever subtle tricks clever people use for grey hair,
the tricks of grey hair are always subtler.

5 The recipient has not been identified. I follow Eghbal's plausible suggestion of reading Ibn Kūshīdh instead of Ibn Kūstīdh as in the MS and the editions. A certain ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz ibn ʿImrān ibn Kūshīdh al-Iṣfahānī is mentioned in Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh*, xxxvi, 321 (dates unknown) and someone from Isfahan called ʿAbd Allāh ibn Kūshīdh is mentioned in Ibn Rustah, *Aʿlāq*, 152; see also al-Zabīdī, *Tāj al-ʿarūs*, *KWShDh*. The verses have not been found elsewhere.

6 Not found elsewhere.

7 The verses are attributed to Maḥmūd al-Warrāq in Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, *Bahjat al-majālis*, i, 212; quoted anonymously in Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, viii, 173–174.

[293] 55 **Abū Yaʿqūb al-Khuraymī**[1]

{139} He was of Turkish descent.[2] Ibrāhīm ibn Manṣūr told me, on the authority of Ibrāhīm ibn al-Ḥakam, who asked Abū Yaʿqūb: "Which are better, your panegyric poems on Abū l-Haydhām and Muḥammad ibn Manṣūr ibn Ziyād when they were still alive, or your elegies on them after they died?" He answered, "You fool! How could poetry of regret and concern compare with poetry of affection when it happens to be accompanied by desire?"[3]

Al-Mubarrad told me: al-Khuraymī was a proficient, naturally gifted and able poet. He composed poems in praise of caliphs, viziers, and nobles, and was richly rewarded. He composed many attractive love poems full of charm. He said, vaunting:[4]

Trust me to be steadfast, decently, for ever,
but do not trust me to be steadfast if you leave me!
My heart has been hit, after fifty years,
by the eyes of light-brown gazelles in desert lands.

Also from this poem:

I am not one who always looks to the side of riches
if high glory lies on the side of poverty.

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1 The MS wrongly has al-Khuzāʿī instead of al-Khuraymī. Abū Yaʿqūb Isḥāq ibn Ḥassān al-Khuraymī (d. 214/829 or several years earlier), a *mawlā*, was active in Syria and Baghdad at the Caliphal court. He has entries in Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 853–858; Ibn al-Jarrāḥ, *Waraqah*, 109–113; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, vii, 335–336; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh*, viii, 198–203; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, viii, 409. See GAS, ii, 550–551; EI2, i, 159–160 (Ch. Pellat); EI3 (Reinhard Weipert); EAL, 50 (P.F. Kennedy); Najjār, *Shuʿarāʾ*, II, iv, 153–170.

2 He describes himself in a verse as being of Soghdian (i.e., Iranian, not Turkish) ancestry (Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 853 and see Ibn al-Jarrāḥ, *Waraqah*, 109).

3 Compare the different versions in Ibn al-Jarrāḥ, *Waraqah*, 110; Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 854; al-Jahshiyārī, *Wuzarāʾ*, 268; Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, v, 327, where al-Khuraymī uses rhyming prose to contrast expectation (*rajāʾ*) with loyalty (*wafāʾ*). Abū l-Haydhām is Abū l-Haydhām ʿĀmir ibn ʿUmārah ibn Khuraym al-Murrī (d. 102/798), poet and military commander, see Ibn al-Jarrāḥ, *Waraqah*, 24–26, GAS, ii, 474; for Muḥammad ibn Manṣūr ibn Ziyād see above, p. 364.

4 Of the following ten verses, vs. 3 is attributed to a Bedouin of the tribe of Ṭayyiʾ in al-Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān*, i, 307, to ʿAbd al-Ṣamad ibn al-Muʿadhdhal in *Aghānī*, xiii, 227, to Abū Saʿīd (*recte* Saʿd) al-Makhzūmī in Ibn Ḥamdūn, *Tadhkirah*, viii, 103, and quoted anonymously in Ibn Qutaybah, *ʿUyūn*, i, 247. Vss. 1 and 3 are quoted anonymously in al-ʿAskarī, *Ṣināʿatayn*, 422; al-Qālī, *Amālī*, i, 221; Ibn Dāwūd, *Zahrah*, 205, quoted (and composed?) by Abū Saʿīd (*recte* Saʿd) al-Makhzūmī. Vs. 10 is quoted in al-Baṣrī, *Ḥamāsah*, i, 11 (anonymously).

But I am a bitter adversary, an avenger,
with many sins of poetry, (?) and with brown spears.[5]
With them I hit the cornerstones of Qays ibn Jaḥdar[6]
and I scattered them just as mangonels hurl boulders.
And the man of Ghawth did not act wrongfully: rather it was me:[7] [294]
would the duckling withstand the falcon?
Ah, I lament for poetry only because I see
that any bat jostles to compose verse.
But it lies beyond a sea and a night that envelops it;
what would it think of dark night in deep sea?
Away with you, away from Luʾayy ibn Ghālib,
for Luʾayy will not sleep before they take revenge![8]
Let the lethal snake alone, do not interfere with it,
for between its dark fangs lie fatalities.

Some people attribute this poem to Abū Saʿd Qawṣarah,[9] but this is incorrect, for it is by al-Khuraymī. Fine verses by him are the following:[10]

Condone my misgivings
and my heated moaning:
What you do by abandoning me
is enough to cause me misgivings.
Is it then not enough for you that through you
I am severed from any close associate?[11]

5 *Kathīru dhunūbi l-shiʿri* probably refers to his invectives, as do the spears (he describes himself as acting wrongfully in vs. 4). Alternatively, one could read *dhanūb* ("bucket filled with water", a metaphor for poetic proficiency), as suggested by Abeer al-Abbasi (personal communication); but after *kathīr* ("many") one would expect a plural, not a singular.

6 Meant are the descendants of Qays ibn Jaḥdar, of the tribe of Ṭayyiʾ (Ibn al-Kalbī/Caskel, *Ǧamharat an-nasab*, i, 256, ii, 458); it is unclear to what events this and the following verses refer.

7 There are several tribes called Ghawth; perhaps Ghawth ibn Ṭayyiʾ is meant (to which Jaḥdar ibn Qays belonged). The poet is clearly boasting of being "wrongful" (*ẓālim*), just as mentioning his "sins" (*dhunūb*) in vs. 4 does not amount to a confession.

8 Luʾayy ibn Ghālib is a leading branch of Quraysh and an ancestor of the Prophet.

9 He is Abū Saʿd al-Makhzūmī; see the next section (§ 56).

10 Not found elsewhere.

11 A pun may be intended: *maqṭūʿ al-qarīn* could also be interpreted as "matchless, peerless".

[From the same poem:[12]

So I complain to your eyes
about everyone with tempting eyes,
And to your cheeks that are wounded
by every glance,
And I seek your favour
humbly, submissively.
Now pity my misery, or else
relieve me and kill me!

He also said,[13]

When affairs are managed by youths
rather than old men, you'll see flaws in some matters.
Young people tend to be hasty,
while old men's calm deliberation wards off error.]

This al-Khuraymī is one of those who composed excellent poetry, and he is also among those who are widely known.

12 The parenthesis is taken from the *Mukhtaṣar* (ed. Farrāj, Appendix, 443).

13 Anonymously in al-Māwardī, *Adab al-wazīr*, 52; anonymously with different rhyme (*khalalū*, *khaṭalū* instead of *khalalā*, *zalalā*) in Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, *Bahjat al-majālis*, ii, 240.

56 Abū Saʿd al-Makhzūmī[1]

[ʿUmar ibn Abī Jaʿfar told me:[2] Ibn Abī Rabīʿah told me: Abū Saʿd the poet was a foundling, a claimant to his lineage. He was one of the best poets of his age and among the most eloquent, the most naturally gifted and most proficient poets.]

Idrīs ibn Muḥammad told me: Abū Saʿd, who claimed to belong to the Banū Makhzūm, said on al-Ashʿath ibn Jaʿfar al-Khuzāʿī:[3]

I came to your door several times, hoping to be admitted,
but permission to enter was barred from me.
If you bar me because you proudly boast of that wolf, [295]
well, your father surely talked to the wolf, upon my life!
But what if he had spoken to a bone-crushing lion? Then
you would have left all people eaten up or drunk up.
This little Sindī man, whose ugliness is not hidden,
talks to an elephant, making it go up and go down![4]

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1 Abū Saʿd (not Saʿīd as in the MS at the heading of this section) ʿĪsā ibn Khālid ibn al-Walīd (dates unknown), who claimed to be a descendant of al-Ḥārith ibn Hishām al-Makhzūmī (a Companion of the Prophet, Makhzūm being a branch of Quraysh), is a poet who lived in Baghdad during the reign of al-Maʾmūn, on whom he composed panegyrics. Al-Ṣafadī (*Wāfī*, xxiii, 450) says that he was active in Samarra and composed panegyrics on al-Muʿtaṣim and al-Afshīn. He also quotes Abū Hiffān as saying, "The poets among the moderns are four: Abū Nuwās, Bakr ibn al-Naṭṭāḥ, Diʿbil, and Abū Saʿd al-Makhzūmī." He has entries in al-Marzubānī, *Muʿjam*, 98; idem, *Muwashshaḥ*, 530; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xxiii, 449–451; and see GAS, ii, 575, EI2, *Suppl.*, 32–33. His lampooning exchanges with Diʿbil are often quoted (see also above, pp. 385f.). His verse has been collected by Faraj Razzūq in *Shiʿr Abī Saʿd al-Makhzūmī*.

2 The bracketed opening passage is taken from the *Mukhtaṣar* (ed. Farrāj, Appendix, 443).

3 Abū Saʿd al-Makhzūmī, *Shiʿr*, 24–26. Vss. 2b, 3–4 are attributed to Diʿbil in Abū Tammām, *Waḥshiyyāt*, 214 and *Aghānī*, xx, 138, and to Razīn ibn Zandaward al-ʿArūḍī in al-Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥayawān*, vii, 217 and Ibn al-Jarrāḥ, *Waraqah*, 34–35 (cf. also al-Jahshiyārī, *Wuzarāʾ*, 193–194, al-Thaʿālibī, *Thimār*, 387, Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ* ed. ʿAbbās, 1305). The verses are said to be an invective on the family of Muḥammad ibn al-Ashʿath al-Khuzāʿī ibn Mukallim al-Dhiʾb al-Khuzāʿī. Mukallim (or Mukallam) al-Dhiʾb, "He Who Spoke to (or: Was Spoken to by) The Wolf", was a Companion of the Prophet, called Uhbān ibn Aws al-Aslamī. For the story see e.g. al-Thaʿālibī, *Thimār*, 386–387, al-Damīrī, *Ḥayāt al-Ḥayawān*, i, 362. There is some confusion about the identity of Mukallim al-Dhiʾb, see e.g. al-Āmidī, *Muʾtalif*, 29.

4 The "little man from Sind (al-Sunaydī)" is probably any mahout or elephant-trainer from the Indian Subcontinent and the poet seems to imply that talking to wolves is nothing to boast of, since a little Indian is able to command an elephant. Al-Jāḥiẓ (*Ḥayawān*, vii, 217–219) comments: "If the children of Uhbān ibn Aws had claimed that their father had spoken to the wolf, they would have been mad; but they claimed that the wolf spoke to their father, that this was

I am a man of Quraysh, a noble branch of it,
and enemies cannot belie me.
{140} I am not marked by having Abyssinian females in my lineage
and you will never see any dark black colour in my face.
Get yourself away! I shall not come to you again, and never again
be found at your door, whether asking something or being asked!

Then al-Ashʿath apprehended him and gave him two hundred lashes. When reproached on account of this, he replied, "I did not have him whipped because of his invective poetry, but because he lied in his poetry and because of his ignorance. He made the wolf's speech to my ancestor like the speech of that Sindī. Is the one like the other?!"

One of our friends told us, on the authority of al-Nawfalī, that Abū Saʿd claimed to belong to the Banū Makhzūm, without being one of them or ever being recognised as such by them. Abū l-Barq, the *mawlā* of Khathʿam, and Shākir al-Madāʾinī said on Abū Saʿd:[5]

A noble man is not haughty
towards people, Abū Saʿd!
So be haughty, if you wish,
because you have neither root nor ancestor,
[296] And because your lot among lineages[6]
is being between freedman and slave,
And because one who slanders you brazenly
does not have to fear the prescribed punishment.[7]

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mentioned to the Prophet (God bless and preserve him), and that he believed it. And the elephant did not speak to the Sindī, and the Sindī never claimed that. Perhaps he talked to the elephant, and the elephant understood him. Razīn al-ʿArūḍī was wholly in error." But I fail to see the error, for the poet does not mention a talking elephant.

5 The text has *Abū l-Barq mawlā Khathʿam wa-Shākir al-Madāʾinī*. Al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, iii, 305 mentions Abū l-Barq Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-Madāʾinī, *mawlā* of Khathʿam. Farrāj's index suggests that Shākir al-Madāʾinī is a different person, but the epigram was surely by only one poet, and I suspect that the text is corrupt and that *wa-Shākir* is to be deleted. The verses are in Ibn Qutaybah, *ʿUyūn*, i, 301 (attributed to Abū l-Barq), Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, vi, 134 (anonymously).

6 Instead of *fī l-ashbāhi* ("among likenesses") as in the MS and the editions I prefer to read *fī l-ansābi* (the other sources have *fī l-nisbati*).

7 *Qadhf* (accusation of fornication or illegitimate descent), if proved false, is punishable with the fixed punishment (*ḥadd*) of eighty lashes.

Someone has transmitted these verses on Abū Saʿd as being by Diʿbil, and the verses before them, on al-Ashʿath, as being by Ibn Wuhayb.[8]

A fine verse that is transmitted as being by Abū Saʿd is the following, addressing Muḥammad ibn Manṣūr:[9]

> I think being rich has made you unjust and you have forgotten me
> and yourself too; lowly worldly matters may make one forgetful.[10]

Ibn Rūmān, the state secretary, told me, on the authority of his father, who said,[11] "I was with al-Muṭṭalib ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Mālik al-Khuzāʿī; Abū Saʿd was there too. Then Diʿbil arrived. Al-Muṭṭalib turned to Abū Saʿd and said, 'Now rattle Diʿbil for me!' That was because al-Muṭṭalib resented Diʿbil's verse:[12]

> Egypt hangs its scandals on you
> and Mosul spits in your face.

So Abū Saʿd said, 'I'll take care of that for you!' When Diʿbil approached the gathering Abū Saʿd said,[13]

> Diʿbil did us a favour that concerns us closely,
> one that I shall not forget as long as I live.[14]
> He made us enter his house and honoured us:
> he brought out his wife and we fucked her.

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8 On Muḥammad ibn Wuhayb see below, § 64.

9 Abū Saʿd al-Makhzūmī, *Shiʿr*, 40; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xxiii, 450, followed by another verse (which is not in the collected *Shiʿr*). In al-Qālī, *Amālī*, ii, 294 the two verses are ascribed to Aḥmad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Ismāʿīl (identity uncertain).

10 I read, with *Amālī* and *Wāfī*, *qad tunsī* (rhyming with *nafsī* in the second verse), instead of *mā tansā* as in Farrāj's text (spelled with final undotted *yāʾ*; the MS has an *alif*).

11 Compare the version in *Aghānī*, xx, 160–161. Al-Muṭṭalib ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Mālik was governor of Egypt.

12 Diʿbil, *Dīwān*, 254 (vs. 8 of a poem of 15 vss.).

13 Abū Saʿd al-Makhzūmī, *Shiʿr*, 56 (where the final word of the second verse has been expurgated). In *Aghānī*, xx, 169 the two verses are presented to Diʿbil in a written note; see also Ibn Abī ʿAwn, *Ajwibah*, 195; al-Jurjānī, *Kināyāt*, 68. In al-Rāghib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ii, 142 they are attributed to al-Raqāshī.

14 Instead of *laysat … ansāhā* as in the MS and the editions, I prefer to read *lastu … ansāhā*, with *Ajwibah*, *Aghānī* and other sources.

Di'bil, angrily, replied, extemporising:[15]

Abū Sa'd, old bag,[16]
who whores with his sister and his wife:
If you saw him, kneeling,
you'd think he is the arch of a bridge;
Or if you saw the prick in his arse,
you'd say: a leg in the stocks![17]
Or if you saw him licking it,
you'd say: butter with sugar!
[297] Or if you saw him smelling it,
you'd say: musk with ambergris!
The slave has kindled his fire
while being himself the frankincense for the fire.[18]
There's always behind him
a rider on his rear."

Ya'qūb ibn Nāṣiḥ al-Barda'ī told me: When Di'bil had uttered these verses he left al-Muṭṭalib and began to dole out raisins and lotus fruit to schoolboys, saying to them, "When Abū Sa'd comes along, you must shout, 'Abū Sa'd, old bag, who whores with his sister and his wife!'" This they did, for a long time, so that he fled from Baghdad to al-Rayy, where he stayed until he died.

Abū Ja'far told me: Abū Sa'd adopted the airs of the nobles though he was a pretender, and the airs of the brave though he was a coward. Often he {141} was seated on ‖ a coat of mail.[19] He was, however, a fine poet. He said on Di'bil:[20]

15 Di'bil, *Dīwān*, 191–192; *Aghānī*, xx, 167, 169, 174, 175.

16 A *qawṣarah* or *qawṣarrah* is a basket e.g. for dates; figuratively it may mean "woman" (al-Zabīdī, *Tāj al-'arūs*, QṢR).

17 I follow *Aghānī*, reading *sāq* ("leg"), instead of *bayt* ("house, room; verse of poetry"), which does not seem to make sense.

18 *Kundurah* is the olibanum tree or its gum-resin, frankincense.

19 The MS has *m.z.r.d*, which is unclear; as Farrāj suggests, it may be a corruption of *zarad*, "coat of mail". The *Mukhtaṣar* has "on a prayer-mat made of coats of mail (*durū'*)".

20 Abū Sa'd al-Makhzūmī, *Shi'r*, 47–48; cf. al-Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān*, iii, 250. "The long dispute between the two poets was clearly a manifestation of the latent conflict between the partisans of Yemen and those of Nizār" (*EI2*, *Suppl.*, "Abū Sa'd al-Makhzūmī"). Di'bil belonged to the former (the Southern Arabs) and Abū Sa'd to the latter (Nizār and Ma'add stand for the Northern Arabs).

But for Maʿadd and its heroic days
—and they are the arrowhead and the sword-blade—,
Space would be too narrow for those living in it,
and there would be neither people nor dwelling;
And *the earth* would be *shaken with its great shaking*[21]
and Diʿbil would be shoved into his mother's arse.

He composed much fine poetry.

21 Quoting Q al-Zalzalah 99:1, referring to the convulsions on the Last Day.

[298] 57 **Makhlad ibn Bakkār al-Mawṣilī**[1]

Abū l-Azhar al-Khazarī al-ʿAwfī told me: Makhlad came to Abū Tammām, who asked him, "Would you like to come to my hammam?" He had one in his house. It consisted of one room of four cubits squared,[2] and the dung of a Marrīsī donkey that he owned served as its fuel to heat it; that was all he needed.[3] Makhlad entered it but soon left it again. "Why won't you stay until you have a good sweat?" asked Abū Tammām. Makhlad replied, "You son of a bitch![4] Sitting down in a basement in winter gives one the piles."

[Charming verses by Makhlad ibn Bakkār are the following, in a panegyric poem on Muḥammad ibn Ḥabīb al-Ṭūsī:[5]

She turned away, but not because of the grey hair that came over me[6]
(I hide the lamp of the back of my head in its darkness),[7]
When she saw my intention to embark on a fearful thing (?)[8]
... (?)]

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1 Makhlad ibn Bakkār al-Mawṣilī (i.e., from Mosul) has no entries in the usual reference works ancient or modern, except for al-Ṣafadī's *Wāfī* (xxv, 395), which quotes seven verses by him and refers to his invective on Abū Tammām quoted in ibid., xi, 294. A section of al-Ṣūlī, *Akhbār Abī Tammām* (ed. ʿAsākir et al., 234–243, ed. & tr. Gruendler, 264–277) deals with his invective on Abū Tammām (who disdained to reply). In both these editions his name is vowelled as Mukhallad; it is Makhlad (or left unvowelled) in all other sources mentioned in this note, and I have adopted this, as Makhlad is more common as a name than Mukhallad. The richest source of his poetry is al-Azdī, *Tārīkh al-Mawṣil* (333, 348–349, 355, 357–358, 363, 374–375, 396–397, 423); some more verses are quoted in *Aghānī*, viii, 370; al-Qālī, *Amālī*, i, 255, ii, 142–143; al-Ḥuṣrī, *Zahr*, 554–555 (where it is said that he had "a sweet nature", *kāna ... ḥulw al-ṭabʿ*); idem, *Jamʿ al-jawāhir*, 362–364; Ibn Rashīq, *ʿUmdah*, i, 111.

2 A proper hammam would have several rooms of increasing heat.

3 Marrīs is a town in Upper Egypt, known for its fine donkeys; see al-Thaʿālibī, *Laṭāʾif al-maʿārif*, 97, tr. Bosworth, 120; Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-buldān* (where the town is called Marrīsah).

4 *Yā bna l-baẓrāʾ*, literally "son of an unclitoridectomised woman".

5 The bracketed passage is taken from the *Mukhtaṣar* (ed. Farrāj, Appendix, 444). Muḥammad ibn Ḥabīb al-Ṭūsī has not been identified; it is probably an error for Muḥammad ibn Ḥumayd al-Ṭūsi (on whom see above, p. 414). The verses have not been found elsewhere.

6 I adopt the emendation suggested by Abeer al-Abbasi (personal communication), reading *ʿanā lī* instead of *ʿiyālī* ("of my dependants"), which does not make sense. This, however, involves an awkward licence (the metre requires *li-shaybi* instead of the expected *li-shaybin* or *li-shaybī*). I also thank Nefeli Papoutsakis for her help with this and the following verse.

7 The poet has apparently been rejected because of his greying hair (hidden perhaps with dye). With the "lamp" he seems to allude to Zakariyyā's words in Q Maryam 19:4 (*My head is aflame with grey hair*); the "darkness" may be his remaining black hair.

8 *Lammā raʾat hammī ʿalā marhūbatin | asmū bihā wa-aṣūnu wajha suʾālī*. As Abeer al-Abbasi suggests (personal communication), it appears that the poet turns to the travel-section here.

Verses by him that were transmitted to us are these:[9]

You who ask me about the true nature of my affair, do not ask!
I am too preoccupied to explain myself.
I was involved in bonds of hatred,
while avoidance attacked me with the bow of boredom.[10]
Then an apple, bitten, passed
between the one I love and myself, and it brought us together.[11]
It had a subtle redness on its side,
[secretly, exquisitely made.
Then its redness covered his cheeks][12]
when he hinted, bashfully, at being united with me.
He was generous to me after being recalcitrant. On his cheeks
traces of kisses were visible to me.
O messenger that the lover sent,
live on a fresh twig,[13] you master messenger!

Makhlad had gone to Iraq, where all the well-known poets are. They gathered at the door of ‖ al-Muʿtaṣim, who gave them permission to enter. They went in [299]
and began to recite their poems and each of them was rewarded with one or two thousand dirhams; no one was given more. Makhlad was among them. He had arrived that year and none of the poets knew him. He recited a poem to al-Muʿtaṣim, who liked it. "Who are you?" he asked. "I am Makhlad." Al-Muʿtaṣim asked, "Al-Mawṣilī?" "Yes, Commander of the Believers!" "We recorded your poem[14] before you left for us." He gave orders that he should be given three thousand dirhams.

For *marhūbah* as "a fearful place", compare Labīd's *Muʿallaqah* (al-Tibrīzī, *Sharḥ al-qaṣā'id al-ʿashr*, 83). The second hemistich remains unclear to me.

9 Not found elsewhere.

10 *Yaddarīnī l-hajru ʿan qaws al-malal*; perhaps meaning his beloved, being bored with him has shunned him. The verb *iddarā* may be taken from the root *DR'* (see Lane, *Lexicon*) and is connected with hunting (see Farrāj's note). Eghbal suggests reading *badaratnī*, but syntax and sense argue against it.

11 Compare Ibn al-Muʿtazz, *Dīwān* (ed. al-Sāmarrā'ī), i, 327, (ed. Sharīf), i, 404: "An apple, bitten, | was the messenger of kisses."

12 The parenthesis is taken from the *Mukhtaṣar* (ed. Farrāj, Appendix, 444).

13 The MS has *ʿan baṣīri l-rusli*, which is unclear; Farrāj adopts the text of the *Mukhtaṣar*: *ʿish naḍīra l-ghuṣni* which I have followed for lack of a better text.

14 *Qad athbatnā*; Farrāj suggests reading this as *qad athabnā*, "we have rewarded", but again the syntax and the sense are unconvincing. It is not clear, however, how the poem could already have been recorded by the Caliph.

58 Abū l-Aṣbagh al-Ḥiṣnī[1]

He is Muḥammad ibn Yazīd, from Ḥiṣn Maslamah. He is a descendant of Maslamah ibn ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Marwān. ʿAbd al-Quddūs ibn Ibrāhīm al-Shāmī told me: Ibn Abī Fanan[2] told me: ʿAbd Allāh ibn Ṭāhir had composed his poem in which he boasts of his father Ṭāhir and mentions his bravery, vaunting his ancestors Muṣʿab, Ruzayq, and others; in it he says:[3]

And my father: he is without peer!
Who could vie with him in glory? Speak up!
He crushed the Deposed One's chest,[4]
while he was surrounded by princes.
His amulets were cut off from him,
who was once the object of fear and hope.

{142} Then Abū l-Aṣbagh al-Ḥiṣnī said:

1 Abū l-Aṣbagh Muḥammad ibn Yazīd ibn Maslamah al-Ḥiṣnī (dates unknown), descendant of the Umayyad Caliph ʿAbd al-Malik (and therefore also sometimes given the *nisbah* al-Umawī, "the Umayyad"). ʿAbd al-Malik's son Maslamah (d. 121/738, famous for his siege of Constantinople in 98–99/716–718) built a fortress (Ḥiṣn Maslamah) in al-Jazīrah (northern Mesopotamia), see Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, s.v., which was inherited by Abū l-Aṣbagh. He has entries in al-Marzubānī, *Muʿjam*, 355–356 and al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, v, 218–219 (wrongly as Abū l-Iṣbaʿ). Little of his poetry is known; apart from his invective on ʿAbd Allāh ibn Ṭāhir quoted by Ibn al-Muʿtazz and others, there is a poem of 43 verses on horse racing in al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, v, 239–241. See on him GAS, ii, 631.

2 Thus, with the *Mukhtaṣar*, instead of Ibn Abī Qays as in the MS. On Ibn Abī Fanan see below, §109.

3 Muṣʿab and Ruzayq are Ṭāhir ibn al-Ḥusayn's grandfather and great-grandfather, respectively, the latter being a *mawlā* of Ṭalḥah al-Ṭalaḥāt al-Khuzāʿī (see above, p. 321). For ʿAbd Allāh's poem see Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, ii, 198–199 (23 vss.), al-Tanūkhī, *Faraj*, i, 341–343 (32 vss.); both sources quote Abū l-Aṣbagh's rejoinder (23 vss. in *ʿIqd*, 51 vss. in *Faraj*); six verses of Abū l-Aṣbagh's poem are also in al-Marzubānī, *Muʿjam*, 355–356; see also al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, v, 218–219. The whole episode including the ensuing encounter of the two is related at great length by al-Tanūkhī (*Faraj*, i, 339–354). *Aghānī*, xii, 103–106 gives different versions of the reconciliation but quotes only four verses of Abū l-Aṣbagh's poem; see also Ibn Ḥamdūn, *Tadhkirah*, ii, 134–136 and see Bosworth, "The Tahirids and Arabic Culture", 63–66, with partial translations of the poems. Yāqūt (*Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, xii, 194–196), after quoting the opening lines of the two poems, also quotes a poem by ʿAllān al-Warrāq al-Shuʿūbī, an invective rejoinder to Abū l-Aṣbagh's poem. All poems have the same rhyme and the rare metre *al-madīd*.

4 "The Deposed One" (*al-makhlūʿ*) is the Caliph al-Amīn (see above, p. 300). I follow Bosworth in taking *maqāwīl* to be a licence for *maqāwil*, pl. of *miqwal*.

Don't be awed, woman, by this tittle-tattle!
All that you have been told is fake news!
If you reckon I should be reproached, [300]
then I shall always be reproached.[5]
—As for you who proclaimed your lineage:
what you have said does not amount to anything!
The one who killed the Deposed One has himself been killed[6]
and the killer's blood has not been avenged.
The power in your hand came from the Deposed One's brother;
your hand had no long arm.[7]
It was through his favours, which were not acknowledged,
that you could do those deeds.
Son of the House of Fire[8] who kindles it,
not having trousers on his hips![9]
Who was Ḥusayn? Who was his father? Who
was Ṭāhir? May a desert ogre snatch them![10]
Who was Ruzayq when you list his merits?
It is a lineage unknown among mankind.
This is a pretension made unsuitable for you
by those ignoble forefathers.
No sap of glory ever flowed
in the wood of their tree; it is rotten.[11]

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5 Vss. 1–2, part of an introductory *nasīb*, are addressed to an unnamed woman. Farrāj's text of vs. 2 has *in ʿadadti l-ʿadhla fiyya idhan | ana fīki l-dahra maʿdhūlū*; in *ʿIqd* it is *idh ʿadimtu l-ʿadla minki wa-idh | ana fīki l-dahra maʿdūlū*. Vs. 3 (which is vs. 12 in the version of *ʿIqd* and vs. 24 in *Faraj*) addresses ʿAbd Allāh ibn Ṭāhir.

6 Ṭāhir, whose soldiers killed al-Amīn (against the wishes of al-Maʾmūn), was by some thought to have been poisoned (see e.g. Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, ii, 522).

7 *Bi-akhi l-makhlūʿi ṭulta yadan | lam yakun fī bāʿihā ṭūlū*. The poet means that the Ṭāhirids' power (*ṭūl al-bāʿ*) derived from al-Maʾmūn. My interpretation differs from Bosworth's ("Over a long period, you received from my brother, the deposed one, favours which were boundless in their extent").

8 The editions have *yā bna binti l-nāri*, followed by Bosworth ("O son of the daughter of hellfire"), but I follow the MS, which has *bayt* instead of *bint*, like all other sources (*ʿIqd*, *Aghānī*, *Faraj*, *Tadhkirah*). It seems to allude to the Zoroastrian, fire-worshipping ancestors of the Persian Ṭāhirids.

9 During their encounter, ʿAbd Allāh gently reproaches the poet, saying that after Ṭāhir's death they found 2,300 pairs of trousers (*sarāwīl*) among his belongings (*Faraj*, i, 348–349).

10 On this curse (*ghālat'humū ghūlū*) see Ullmann, *Flüche*, 76; Bosworth mistranslates it ("A demon of the desert must have suckled them").

11 *Madkhūl*, "corrupt, rotten, diseased" also alludes to *dakhīl*, "extraneous, intruder".

From bottom to top it has been
eaten by thin worms.

This poem reached ʿAbd Allāh ibn Ṭāhir. When he went to Syria he intentionally took his route via Ḥiṣn Maslamah. Then he went with a small number of companions to Abū l-Aṣbagh, disguised so that he would not be recognised. When he saw the poet[12] he asked, "Are you Abū l-Aṣbagh?" "I am." "What made you say what you said" asked ʿAbd Allāh, "in your rejoinder to ʿAbd Allāh?" "What did I say then?" ʿAbd Allāh replied, "I mean your verses:

Who was Ḥusayn? Who was his father? Who
was Ṭāhir? May a desert ogre snatch them!
[301] Who was Ruzayq when you list his merits?
It is, I swear to God, an unknown lineage."

Then al-Ḥiṣnī understood that the man was ʿAbd Allāh. "It was you who made me say that," he said, "because of your verse:

And my father: he is without peer!
Who could vie with him in glory? Speak up!

So when you said, 'Speak up!' we found we had to speak up." ʿAbd Allāh smiled and said, "You were right! And we forgive you. I will give orders that you will be given one thousand dinars. But let my clemency not delude you into ever lampooning commanders again! For you will not know how it may fall out; it may be that it will concern someone who is not as clement as I." After that, al-Ḥiṣnī composed all his poetry in praise of the Ṭāhirids.

12 The longer versions relate that Abū l-Aṣbagh, who had thought himself safe in his distant fortress, despaired of his life when he knew that ʿAbd Allāh was coming for him. Stoically, he left the gate of his fortress open and sat down at it, hoping that at least his family would be spared.

59 Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥajjāj[1]

He was one of al-Manṣūr's *mawlā*s. Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad ibn Maymūn al-Maṣṣīsī told me: Diʿbil ibn ʿAlī, the poet, informed me, saying, "When I left Baghdad, intending to visit al-Muṭṭalib ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-Khuzāʿī in Egypt, and when we reached al-Anbār,[2] I lodged in one of its inns. There I met a man of shabby appearance, dressed in rags, sitting in a corner of the inn. I asked him, 'Where are you from?' He answered, 'I am from Baghdad.' I asked, 'Where are you going?' 'To Egypt, if God wills.' 'What do you want to do there?' 'I want to see a relative of mine there.' I asked him, 'Have you an animal to ride on?' ‖ {143}
'Only my feet', he answered. I said, 'It is a long journey. Would you like to stay with us? Then I'll give you one of the mules that carry our luggage. You can ride it, and you will be in charge of buying what we need along the way until you arrive in Egypt, for I hope you will not criticise our company.' 'Agreed!' he said, 'May God make you prosper!' I gave him a mule and he rode it. We travelled together on the road very pleasantly. He was extremely careful about what to buy and where to find it, getting it cheaply and being trustworthy, all the way until we reached Egypt. One day I said to him, ‖ 'Ask what you want, for you [302]
deserve it.' He replied, 'I'd like to ask you to take me to that Emir!' 'That is an easy thing!', I said. 'But that is the only thing I want!', he said. I told him, 'Be ready tomorrow morning, then we'll visit him together.' The following day we walked hand in hand, having entered the Emir's door. I told him to sit down where poets and other visitors were already seated. Al-Muṭṭalib called them to him one by one. If it was a visitor he would present the Emir his petition,[3] and if it was a poet he would declaim his poem. Finally, when everyone had had his

1 Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥajjāj was a poet active in Baghdad and Egypt. He has an entry in al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, vi, 303–304, where it is said that Ibn al-Jarrāḥ mentions him in his *al-Waraqah* as a good poet, but he is not in the extant part of *al-Waraqah*. See on him GAS, ii 600. He should of course not be confused with the much later al-Ḥusayn ibn Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥajjāj (d. 391/1001), famous or notorious for his profuse pornographic and scatological poems (GAS, ii, 592–594).

2 Al-Muṭṭalib was governor of Egypt (see above, p. 431). Al-Anbār lies on the Euphrates, where the river is closest to Baghdad; its ruins are near modern Fallūjah. For the following see *Aghānī*, xx, 159, where the man is called Aḥmad ibn So-and-so the saddler (*Aḥmad ibn Fulān al-sarrāj*). The story, in Diʿbil's words, is transmitted by ʿAbd Allāh ibn Abī l-Shīṣ (on whom see below, § 90), who had forgotten the name of Aḥmad's father. One wonders if "al-Ḥajjāj" was misremembered as "*al-sarrāj*" at some stage. See also al-Nashshābī, *Mudhākarah*, 97–98 (where he is called Aḥmad ibn al-Sarrāj).

3 The editions have *dhakara lahū wasīlatan*, but I follow the MS, which has *dhakara lahū wasīlatahū*.

turn and only my companion remained, al-Muṭṭalib said to him, 'You there, if you have a request, mention it! Or else go away.' Then, by God! our friend stood up and declaimed:[4]

I did not visit al-Muṭṭalib without a request
and an ambition that has reached the highest degree.[5]
I have singled him out for my eloquence, not presenting to him
petitions or meeting him with written work.[6]
I made my she-camel travel to the Holy House,[7]
despite the exertion and perseverance it implied;
I threw her and my own face into every afternoon heat
that pierced my skin and sinews.
At last, having performed my pious duties, I pulled on her reins
to turn her, and she went to the lord of the Arabs.
I have sought refuge at two foursomes: touching
the cornerstones of Muṭṭalib and the House with its curtains.[8]
[303] The House is for the hoped-for afterlife,
and you are for the hoped-for present desires.
How far has she gone seeking, without cause;
how near is what she hoped for from Muṭṭalib's generosity!
This is my hope; here is Egypt, propitiously,
and you are you, whom I address in close proximity.

4 In the *Aghānī* version Di'bil has kindly composed a poem telling his friend to claim it as his own and recite it to the governor, but to his surprise (cf. the interjected *wa-llāhi*, "by God!" here) Aḥmad recites a poem of his own instead. Vs. 8 is lacking in *Aghānī*, xx, 160, which has an additional verse; the same in al-Nashshābī, *Mudhākarah*, 99. Vss. 1, 3, 5, 9 are quoted anonymously in al-'Askarī, *Ṣinā'atayn*, 359; vss. 1–2 are attributed to Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥajjāj in al-Tha'ālibī, *Lubāb*, 179; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, vi, 303–304 quotes vss. 1–2, 6–7, 3, 5, 4, 9.

5 The two hemistichs are reversed in the MS, clearly incorrectly, and I follow Farrāj's emendation, in line with all other sources. The verse contains paronomasia (al-Muṭṭalib and *maṭlab*, "request").

6 Instead of *bayānī* ("my eloquence"), the *Mukhtaṣar* has *thanā'ī* ("my praise") and *Aghānī* and other sources have *rajā'ī* ("my hope, request"), all equally possible. Farrāj has *rasā'il* ("epistles") but I follow the MS, which has *wasā'il*, like *Aghānī* and *Mudhākarah*; cf. the singular *wasīlah* ("petition") used in the preceding narrative. "Written work" (*kutub*) is perhaps a sly insinuation: in the *Aghānī* version Di'bil relates that he has brought some books to the governor, and that Aḥmad pointed at them while declaiming this verse.

7 The Kaaba in Mecca.

8 The poet uses *istār*, "four", from Persian *chahār*, comparing al-Muṭṭalib to the Kaaba.

Then al-Muṭṭalib exclaimed, 'Here I am for you! Here I am![9] Who are you?' 'I am Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥajjāj, the *mawlā* of al-Manṣūr.' 'Welcome!', said the governor, 'I will see to it that you receive the same reward as all other poets. So take that, if you wish!'" Diʿbil continued: "So I was perplexed by the quality of his poem, his forceful style, and by his clever behaviour. When he carried the money with him and we left, I said to him, 'You have not treated me well, concealing your purpose, even concealing it until I took you to that place. You have fallen short[10] in what someone like you owed me!' He replied, 'I swear to God, you have been good to me with your company and friendship. I was reluctant to let you know my intention so that we might be envious of each other.' 'God be praised! Why should I be envious of you?' I said. He answered, 'Enough of that, Abū ʿAlī! A preacher does not love another preacher!'[11] I burst out laughing. Then we parted."[12]

Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥajjāj composed these verses:[13]

I swear by Him to whose House pilgrims go on pilgrimage
on reddish camels spurred with song on mountain passes in deserts:[14]
Eyelids were barred from closing shut
and human beings were made to observe the stars.[15]

9 *Labbayka labbayka*: the ancient formula uttered by pilgrims.

10 Reading *wa-qaṣṣarta* instead of *wa-qaṣṣartu* as in the editions.

11 *Al-qāṣṣ lā yuḥibbu l-qāṣṣ*: quoted as a proverb in al-Thaʿālibī, *Tamthīl*, 170; idem, *Yatīmah*, iii, 155; al-Maydānī, *Majmaʿ*, ii, 156 (among the proverbs of the "moderns"). A *qāṣṣ* is literally a "storyteller" but usually a popular preacher or sermoniser.

12 In *Aghānī*'s version Diʿbil expresses his resentment and envy more strongly; unlike his companion he left empty-handed and later he lampooned al-Muṭṭalib (cf. above, p. 431).

13 Attributed to Jaḥshawayh (see below, §103) in al-Afṭasī, *Majmūʿ*, 488–489 (in a poem of 9 vss.).

14 Oaths mentioning pilgrimage are common in love poetry; see also below, p. 443.

15 "Observing the stars" is an old image for being sleepless.

{144} **60 al-Ṣīnī, the Poet of Ṭāhir ibn al-Ḥusayn**[1]

Ibrāhīm ibn al-Khaṣīb told me: ʿAbd Allāh ibn Jaʿfar al-Aṣamm told me: al-Ṣīnī was part of Ṭāhir's household. He never composed panegyric poems on anyone
[304] else since he was attached to him. He was a naturally gifted, ‖ able poet. Once, Ṭāhir was angry with him and imprisoned him. This came to the knowledge of al-Maʾmūn, who said to Ṭāhir, "What did he do, this poet of yours, al-Ṣīnī?" Ṭāhir replied, "He is in prison, Commander of the Believers. [I have struck his name from my books."][2] "Why is that?" "There was something that made me angry with him."[3] The Caliph said, "Does someone who asserted that the right state of the Caliphate in its territory depends on being protected by your swords deserve to be wronged? [I swear to God, you have wronged him! You have not recompensed him. Now that you have done what you did, it is only me who may seek justice for him, since he said on you:[4]

> Your standing under the protection of swords
> has consolidated the Caliphate in its territory."[5]

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1 The heading in MS (but not the following text) wrongly has al-Ḥiṣnī. This poet is almost wholly obscure. He has an entry in al-Marzubānī, *Muʿjam*, 358, who names him as "Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī al-Ṣīnī, the transmitter (*rāwiyah*) of al-ʿAttābī's poetry and the poet of Ṭāhir ibn al-Ḥusayn and his son ʿAbd Allāh", quoting nine verses by him. Sezgin (*GAS*, ii, 601) suggests that it may be a corruption of al-Ḍabbī, and it is as Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī al-Ḍabbī that he is listed in al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, iv, 120, which copies most of al-Marzubānī's entry. Verses quoted anonymously in al-Mubarrad, *Kāmil*, i, 345 are in some MSS attributed to "Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī al-Ḍabbī, the poet of Dhū l-Yamīnayn Ṭāhir ibn al-Ḥusayn" on the authority of Ibn al-Jarrāḥ (see editorial note). The *nisbah* al-Ṣīnī, though rare, is not unknown. According to al-Samʿānī (*Ansāb*, iii, 577–578) it may be derived either from al-Ṣīn (China), for instance in the case of people who travelled to the Far East, or from a village near Wāsiṭ in Iraq, called Ṣīniyyat al-Ḥawānīt or al-Ṣīniyyah (cf. Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-buldān*). On balance, it seems more likely that al-Ṣīnī was misread as al-Ḍabbī than the reverse.

2 This and the following parenthesis have been taken from the *Mukhtaṣar* (ed. Farrāj, Appendix, 444–445 and Eghbal, 37, with additional text that is omitted by Farrāj).

3 The *Mukhtaṣar* has "because of his frequent importunate behaviour and his foul tongue" (ed. Farrāj, Appendix, 444).

4 Attributed to al-Ṣīnī in al-Marzubānī, *Muʿjam*, 358 (with four more vss.), al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, iv, 120; anonymously in al-ʿAskarī, *Ṣināʿatayn*, 172.

5 With this parenthesis I have followed the *Mukhtaṣar*, to replace a passage from the MS: "'(Now that you have done what you did,) no one but me can ask from him what is due to me, so that he may know what he may say after that. I swear to God, if you let him out of prison I'll cut off his head!' Then Ṭāhir realised that he had made a mistake and had not treated him kindly."

Then Ṭāhir realised that he had made a mistake and had not requited him as he deserved. "Commander of the Believers," he said, "It was a lapse such as is made by kings, a slip such as made by princes!" The Caliph said, "You have not observed your obligation and not known what is due. But I pledge unto God that he shall not leave prison as long as you live, so that people behaving in this manner will learn a lesson thereby. If they want to compose poetry they shall not make it say that the caliphate will not stand firm but for our slaves!"][6] Ṭāhir rewarded the poet handsomely while he remained in prison, for he dared not release him, afraid of what al-Maʾmūn might do.

Al-Ṣīnī composed these verses:[7]

[I wish I knew about the most charming flirt on earth,
will he persist in being ours, or won't he?]
They assert that if you occupy yourself with pleasures
you will be consoled about the one you love.
They lie! I swear by Him to whom camels are offered
and pilgrims seek refuge, perambulating and performing prayer,
Even a remnant of passion is hotter than embers
to a lover's heart, being roasted.

[He also said:[8]

They both rejoiced in meeting[9] on the day of parting,
seeking refuge in crying and embracing.
So long had they kept secret their love, fearful of separation!
So long had they hidden their burning longing!

6 Al-Maʾmūn seems to object to the idea that his reign is dependent on his subordinates, as the quoted verse suggests.

7 The parenthesised first verse is taken from the *Mukhtaṣar* (ed. Farrāj, Appendix, 445). Vss. 2–4 are attributed to Mānī l-Muwaswis (also called Mānī l-Majnun, who has an entry below, §100), see Ibn Ḥabīb, *ʿUqalāʾ*, 264; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, iv, 283; al-Sarrāj, *Maṣāriʿ*, ii, 25; Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntaẓam*, xi, 338; Waṭwāṭ, *Ghurar*, 170–171; Ibn Shākir, *Fawāt*, iv, 32; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, iv, 346–347. All four verses are attributed to Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Malik ibn al-Zayyāt (d. 233/847, see GAS, ii, 576–577) in his *Dīwān*, 239.

8 Taken from the *Mukhtaṣar* (ed. Farrāj, Appendix, 445). The verses are in al-Buḥturī's *Dīwān*, 1518; quoted anonymously in al-Zajjājī, *Amālī*, 57; idem, *Akhbār*, 76; Ibn al-Marzubān, *Shawq*, 70 (vss. 1, 3–4) = idem, *Muntahā*, 100; Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, v, 133.

9 Instead of *bi-l-ʿIrāqi*, as apparently in the *Mukhtaṣar* and *Shawq*, I read *bi-l-liqāʾi*, with al-Buḥturī's *Dīwān* and *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*. Another possible reading is *bi-l-firāqi* ("in parting"), as in al-Zajjājī's *Amālī* and *Akhbār*, which stresses the paradox that is the point of the epigram.

Then parting appeared, and they met:
a parting that brought them a being together.
How could I curse parting with evil,
when the day of parting was a meeting?]

There are very few reports on al-Ṣīnī. He lived only in Baghdad.[10]

10 Here called by its official name, Madīnat al-Salām.

61 al-Qiṣāfī al-Tamīmī[1]

Ibn Abī l-Mundhir told me: al-Ḥusayn ibn Diʿbil said to me: I heard my father, Diʿbil ibn ʿAlī ibn Razīn,[2] say: ʿAmr al-Qiṣāfī is a *mawlā* of ‖ the Banū Rabīʿah ibn Kalb ibn Saʿd ibn Zayd Manāh ibn Tamīm." Al-Ḥusayn said: I heard my father say:[3] ʿAmr al-Qiṣāfī composed poetry for sixty years and produced only one good verse, which is this: [305]

> Camels with sunken eyes, swift; when the cameleers spur then on
> you see their hind legs preceding their front legs.

[And one other verse, which is this:[4]

> I had a mind to kill her, so much I loved her:
> so that she would be my opponent at the Last Judgement.]

Of his love poetry the following verses, from a long poem, are admired:[5]

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1 Abū l-Fayḍ ʿAmr ibn Naṣr al-Qiṣāfī al-Tamīmī (d. c. 247/861), a poet from Basra, a *mawlā*. His *nisbah* (after al-Qiṣāf ibn Mālik, of Tamīm, see Ibn al-Kalbī/Caskel, *Ǧamharat an-nasab*, Tab. 63) is corrupt in the MS (Farrāj thinks it reads there as al-ʿAḍāfiṣī, but perhaps al-Fuṣāfiṣī is intended). He has an entry in Ibn al-Jarrāḥ, *Waraqah*, 7–9; idem, *Das ʿAmr-Buch* (ed. Bräu), 64–65 (which has al-Quḍāʿī instead of al-Qiṣāfī); al-Marzubānī, *Muʿjam*, 33–34; Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, i, 518 (ed. Sayyid; Flügel's edition, 163 has al-Ruṣāfī, al-Ṭawīl's edition, 266 has al-ʿIṣāmī). See GAS, ii, 526. There is more confusion apart from the *nisbah*, because § 121 below is on "al-Qiṣāfī, whose name is ʿAmr", but who is probably a son called Abū Naṣr al-Qiṣāfī (see below and Ibn al-Jarrāḥ, *Waraqah*, 8).

2 Reading, with Farrāj, *abī Diʿbil ibn ʿAlī ibn Razīn* instead of *Abī ʿAlī ibn Diʿbil ibn Ruzayq*, as in the MS.

3 Ibn al-Jarrāḥ, *Waraqah*, 7–8, al-Marzubānī, *Muʿjam*, 34. In al-Thaʿālibī, *Yatīmah*, iii, 329 the remark is ascribed to al-Jāḥiẓ. The verse is also quoted in Ibn Abī ʿAwn, *Tashbīhāt*, 70 (attributed to "al-Quḍāʿī"), in al-Shimshāṭī, *Anwār*, i, 368, and, anonymously, in al-ʿAskarī, *Dīwān al-maʿānī*, ii, 123; al-Khālidiyyān, *Ashbāh*, i, 192; al-Qālī, *Dhayl al-Amālī*, 72.

4 The parenthesis (which contradicts the preceding statement) is taken from the *Mukhtaṣar* (ed. Farrāj, Appendix, 446). The verse, with two following verses, is in al-Zawzanī, *Ḥamāsat al-ẓurafāʾ*, ii, 96, attributed to Majnūn Banī ʿĀmir (Majnūn Laylā; but not found in his *Dīwān*). Muḥyī l-Dīn Ibn al-ʿArabī seems to claim it for himself (*Muḥāḍarat al-abrār*, ii, 99). It ended up, anonymously, in *Alf laylah wa-laylah*, *The Thousand and One Nights*, see e.g. Lyons, *The Arabian Nights*, iii, 354, who followed the Macnaghten edition (iv, 262) in reading *bi-qublatin* ("of pressing a kiss on her cheek") instead of the far more interesting *bi-qatlihā*.

5 The verses, addressing a woman, have not been found elsewhere.

The Caliph is just in his verdict,
so go to his door. I shall come to you.
Return to me a heart that you have taken away,
O most manifestly unjust one in your making us part![6]
You have wronged a generous, noble man,
and you have rejected a man who never rejected you.
I see that you, ornament and splendour of this world,
forget someone who will never forget you.
It is as if there were wine and apples, mixed
with cloves, in your mouth after you have slept.
Other people are preoccupied with their religion and worldly matters
but my soul is preoccupied with nothing but thinking of you.

He also said:[7]

You who resemble a twig in beauty and shape,
unique one, who gave a lover ardent passion:
In beauty, charm, flirtation, and every brilliancy
you have become matchless.
O my desire, my wish, my hope! I have become
a slave to the beauty of your face.
{145} So protect me from hatred, forgive me,
and make me drink the honey of your sweet saliva!

[ʿAmr al-Qiṣāfī also said:[8]

Praised be He who sent down the days in their station
and made people weak-minded and regarded:[9]

6 Farrāj glosses *tabārīkī* as being derived from *tabārā*, "to vie, compete", but I prefer to take it as a licence for *tabāru'ikī*, from *tabāra'a*, "to part from one another".

7 Not found elsewhere. The addressee is male.

8 The parenthesis is taken from the *Mukhtaṣar* (ed. Farrāj, Appendix, 446). The verses are quoted anonymously in al-Tawḥīdī, *Mathālib*, 87; al-Māwardī, *Adab al-dīn wa-l-dunyā*, 133; Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabā'*, vi, 206–207. Vss. 2–3 are in al-Sakkākī, *Miftāḥ al-ʿulūm*, 197 and al-Khaṭīb al-Qazwīnī, *Talkhīṣ al-Miftāh* and its many commentaries (see *Shurūḥ al-Talkhīṣ*, i, 452–453); they are sometimes ascribed to the famous 3rd/9th-century heretic Ibn al-Rāwandī, e.g. in al-ʿAbbāsī, *Maʿāhid*, i, 53. They are attributed to Naṣr ibn Aḥmad al-Khubzaruzzī (d. c. 327/938) in Waṭwāṭ, *Ghurar*, 175.

9 *Maʾfūnan wa-marmūqā*; cf. *Muʿjam al-udabā'*: *mashnūʾan wa-mawmūqā* ("hated and beloved"); *Adab al-dīn wa-l-dunyā*: *marfūḍan wa-marmūqā* ("rejected and regarded").

One who is knowing, discerning, yet unsuccessful in his ways,
and another who is stupid, foolish, yet prosperous among people.
This is what leaves minds bewildered
and turns a discerning, experienced man into a heretic.

He vied with other poets, competing with them and lampooning them. He surpassed the poets of his time. There is no verse by him that is not composed in praise of a caliph or a vizier; he earned his livelihood from them. He was fond of wine.]

[306] **62 al-Khārakī**[1]

His name is [Aḥmad ibn][2] Isḥāq, known only as al-Khārakī. Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad ibn ʿUmar told me: Ibn al-Dāyah told me:[3] Abū Nuwās said to me, "I did not compose any libertine or outrageous poetry until I came in touch with al-Khārakī. He did these things openly and unashamedly, and we modelled ourselves on him and followed his lead. We and those who follow our method were dependent on him."

Among the widely known verses by him are the following:[4]

When they brought me their fiery wine,
called "thickened grape juice", hard, not soft,[5]

1 Aḥmad ibn Isḥāq al-Khārakī, poet from Basra, has entries in Ibn al-Jarrāḥ, *Waraqah*, 61–63 and al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, vi, 238 (where he is called Aḥmad ibn Isḥāq ibn ʿAmr al-Khārakī). Khārak, now known as Khark or Kharg, is a small island not far from the Persian coast in the north of the Gulf (Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, *EI2*, iv, 1056–1057, "Khārag" [G. Rentz]). Ibn al-Jarrāḥ mentions two poets called al-Khārakī, Aḥmad ibn Isḥāq (61–63) and ʿAmr al-Aʿwar (the one-eyed, 59–61); it is not known if they were related. Both were known for their invective (*hijāʾ*) and libertine poetry (*mujūn*). Sezgin (*GAS*, ii, 526) mentions only the former. Yāqūt (op. cit.) mentions "al-Khārakī the poet, in the days of al-Maʾmūn", but it is not clear which of the two is meant. Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, i, 521 mentions both Aḥmad ibn Isḥāq al-Khārakī and ʿAmr al-Khārakī, each with fifty folios of poetry (the *nisbah*s are wrongly vowelled as al-Khārikī). Aḥmad al-Khārakī is described as stingy by al-Jāḥiẓ (*Bukhalāʾ*, 125–126, tr. Serjeant, 108–109) and as "libertine, with nasty poetry" in al-Marzubānī, *Muʿjam*, 32. *Aghānī*, xviii, 182 mentions a certain Muḥammad ibn Ziyād al-Ḥārikī, which is probably a corruption of al-Khārakī, as someone flirting with heresy to appear witty (see also Szombathy, *Mujūn*, 271).

2 The parenthesis, supplied by Farrāj, is taken from the *Mukhtaṣar*.

3 A longer version in Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān*, v, 4 (Ḥamzah al-Iṣbahānī quoting Ibn al-Muʿtazz), where Abū Nuwās says, "I did not compose libertine or outrageous poetry until I came in touch with Aḥmad ibn Isḥāq al-Khārakī. Before him, people in Basra, for a long time, used to conceal their libertinism in describing wine, wine-shops, taverns, or openly professing pederasty, until al-Khārakī came, who openly and unashamedly spoke about this. So we modelled ourselves on him …" See also *Dīwān*, iii, 366: "Abū Nuwās had a friend called al-Khārakī, from an island in the Persian Sea called Khārak. Abū Nuwās transmitted some of his poems and admired him …" In this light, al-Khārakī's absence in the standard reference works about Abū Nuwās is surprising. Jamal Eddine Bencheikh is a rare exception in mentioning al-Khārakī's role (*EI2*, iv, 1004, in the entry "Khamriyya").

4 Also attributed to Abū Nuwās (*Dīwān*, iii, 167), with redactor's comment, "also ascribed to al-Khārakī". For another translation see Montgomery, "Abū Nuwās, The Justified Sinner?", 153–154 (using the slightly different text of the *Dīwān*).

5 *Yudʿā l-ṭilāʾa ṣalīban ghayra khawwārī*; Montgomery: "allegedly an inspissated ⟨juice⟩, hard as stone, not soft and full".

I made a show of piety and said, "I don't like wine,[6]
But God knows that I think only of wine!"
Their spokesman swore to God that it had been boiled,[7]
meaning to praise it by deforming and shaming it.
But I replied, "Whoever torments it with fire,
may God never remove from him the burning of His fire!"

He also said:[8]

Gold in gold, brought
by a branch of silver:[9]
It came as a delight to the eye, [307]
in the hand of a delight to the eye.
Welcome, wine and its bringer,
two good smells,[10]
Combined as two good companions,
looking similar, going well together!
May an inauspicious bird of separation
never come between them!
Rather, may we be free from want as long
as we are alive, forever embracing,
Drinking in the morning and the evening,
never buying for cash, running up a debt!

Charming verses by him are the following:[11]

Someone who is unbound laughs at someone tied up,
with the laughter of the happy relaxed of mind.
He laughs at the sorrows of a young passionate lover
who is struck by the wind of love, shackled,

6 *Al-khamru akrahuhā*; in Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān* it is *al-khamru ashrabuhā* ("Wine is what I drink"), but the former is clearly better.

7 Sufficiently boiling wine makes it permissible to drink it.

8 Attributed, with some differences, to Muslim ibn al-Walīd in Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, vi, 428 (also his *Dīwān*, 344), to ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-ʿAbbās ibn al-Faḍl ibn al-Rabīʿ in al-Shābushtī, *Diyārāt* (ed. ʿAwwād), 68, (ed. & tr. Kilpatrick), 80–81; and to al-Maʾmūn in al-Raffāʾ, *Muḥibb*, iv, 72–72.

9 Golden wine in a gold or gilded cup, offered by a light-coloured slender boy.

10 Paronomasia: *Marḥaban bi-l-rāḥi wa-l-rā- | ʾiḥi min rayḥānataynī*.

11 Not found elsewhere.

Driven out of his mind with love of a black-eyed fawn,
dark, with tender glances, cheekdowned.[12]
He says to the distress when it arrives,
"Protect the head of the one who loves me!"[13]

[Choice verses by him, on loving ardently:[14]

Drinking in the evening, to matutinal drinking in the morning,
he weeps with eyes pouring forth their tears.
The hands of passion keep striking fire for his lifeblood
with the firestick of separation.
His eyes thirst for a fawn that can speak;
he is distressed by separation, sad of heart.
He has hidden his passion, concealing it inside him,
but his flood of tears has revealed it.]

12 Farrāj reads *maḥṭūṭ* ("put down", interpretation unclear) but the MS and al-Ṭabbā"s edition have *makhṭūṭ*, which I take to mean "having cheek-down", *khaṭṭ*, a common synonym of *ʿidhār* ("cheek-down"), which is frequently described in homoerotic poetry (see e.g. Bauer, *Liebe und Liebesdichtung*, 255–280).

13 Reading and translation uncertain. The MS has *kh-w-ṭ*, read by Farrāj as *khūṭī*, meaning unclear, and I follow his suggested alternative, reading *ḥūṭī*. The verb *ḥāṭa* has a direct object when it means "to protect", so either *bi-raʾsi* is a poetic licence, or it rather means "surround (the head)".

14 The bracketed passage is taken from the *Mukhtaṣar* (ed. Farrāj, Appendix, 446). The verses have not been found elsewhere.

63 Muḥammad ibn Ḥāzim al-Bāhilī[1]

Muḥammad ibn al-Ṣaqr al-Mawṣilī told me: Abū Diʿāmah informed me: I heard Muḥammad ibn Ḥāzim say: "ʿAbd Allāh ibn Ṭāhir sent me a radiantly beautiful slave girl. I could not restrain myself and had intercourse with her. But I found her to be indescribably wide and cold, the desert of Mecca being a gall nut's hole compared with hers, and the snow of Hamadhān being a hammam compared with her.[2] I wanted ‖ ʿAbd Allāh to know this about her, so I wrote to him:[3] [308]

Wonderful, a jewel that delights
the eye with her beautiful purity!
I beheld her, I praised her
before the moment of unveiling her.
[Then I unveiled her, so as to increase
her beauty and radiance.
But then her flaws and blemishes became apparent to me
by being unveiled,][4]
So I regretted not having
left her with her covering,
And I was content with enjoying {146}
her beauty and prettiness.

When these verses reached him, he sent me another girl whose outward charms were like her interior charms. I sold the first one for five hundred dinars."

1 Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad ibn Ḥāzim al-Bāhilī (dates unknown, contemporary of al-Maʾmūn), a *mawlā* of the tribe of Bāhilah, poet of mostly satirical verse, from Basra, active in Baghdad. He has entries in Ibn al-Jarrāḥ, *Waraqah*, 117–119; *Aghānī*, xiv, 90–111; al-Shābushtī, *Diyārāt* (ed. ʿAwwād), 275–283, (ed. & tr. Kilpatrick), 375–389; al-Marzubānī, *Muʿjam*, 371–372; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, iii, 113; al-Qifṭī, *Muḥammadūn*, 279–280; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, ii, 317. See GAS, ii 517, EI2, vii, 404 (J.E. Bencheikh). His poetry has been collected by Muḥammad Khayr al-Biqāʿī (hereafter al-Bāhilī, *Dīwān*).

2 See al-Rāghib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ii, 156, where these hyperbolic comparisons of female genitalia are attributed to an unnamed Bedouin describing his wife, and al-Ābī, *Nathr al-durr*, ii, 227, where a man says it on a slave girl he bought.

3 Al-Bāhilī, *Dīwān*, 21, taken from Ibn al-Muʿtazz (without the prose introduction).

4 These two verses are taken from the *Mukhtaṣar* (ed. Farrāj, Appendix, 446–447). Instead of *maddat* as in ed. Farrāj I read *fa-badat*, with Eghbal (notes, p. 38).

Ibn Abī ʿAwn al-Madīnī, who was a jurisprudent, said:[5] Muḥammad al-Bāhilī was most importune when he begged and most insistent when he asked for a favour, and this while in his poetry he often mentioned being content with little. He was one of a number of those who described themselves as the opposite of what they really were and who became famous for this. Among them is Abū Nuwās, who frequently mentions pederasty and describes it as a personal ornament, whereas he fornicated more with females than a monkey. Abū Ḥukaymah[6] used to describe his sexual impotence and his inability to copulate, while it was said that a billy-goat falls short of him. Jaḥshawayh[7] describes himself as a pathic, but he would mount donkeys, let alone other creatures. Ibn Ḥāzim describes his contentment and righteousness, but he was greedier than a dog; he would ride a mile[8] for the sake of one single dirham, let alone other things.[9]

He is the finest poet as to his expressions and the most subtle as to his motifs. He composed these verses:[10]

When the roads to one's affair are blocked,
perseverance will breach open all that was barred.
Do not despair even though the quest be long:
if you seek support from perseverance you'll find relief.
How proper it is that he who perseveres will attain his need,
and that he who keeps knocking on doors will enter!
Seek a good place to put your foot before making a step,
for he who ascends a slope inattentively will slip.

5 He is apparently not to be identified as Ibrāhīm ibn Abī ʿAwn (d. 322/934), the author of *al-Tashbīhāt* and *al-Ajwibah al-muskitah*, who was from Baghdad, not Medina, and a *kātib*, not a *faqīh*.

6 He has an entry below, § 104.

7 He has an entry below, § 103.

8 I adopt Farrāj's suggestion of reading *al-mīl*, instead of *al-Nīl*, "the Nile".

9 A shorter version of this passage (with Jaḥshawayh being replaced by Abū l-ʿAtāhiyah as a heretic posing as a pious renunciant) is attributed to Ibn al-Muʿtazz himself, not to Ibn Abī ʿAwn, in al-Raffāʾ, *Muḥibb*, iv, 364; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, iii, 79; Ibn al-ʿImād, *Shadharāt*, iii, 409; Ibn Aydamir, *Durr*, xi, 113.

10 They are attributed to Muḥammad ibn Bashīr in Abū Tammām's *Ḥamasah* (al-Marzūqī, *Sharḥ*, 1173–1175 [6 vss.]) and to Muḥammad ibn Yasīr al-Riyāshī (with the common confusion of Bashīr and Yasīr again) in al-Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān*, ii, 360; Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 879; *Aghānī*, xiv, 41–42; anonymously in Ibn Qutaybah, *ʿUyūn*, iii, 120 (vss. 1, 3, 2); Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, ii, 69, 241 (tr. Boullata, i, 51, 162).

Regarding[11] what we described of his greed and craving, an amazing deed is mentioned that indicates high-mindedness and nobility of spirit. He had been harassing Muḥammad ibn Ḥumayd ibn Qaḥṭabah[12] with cruel lampoons, which had hurt him. The man sought to remedy the situation with every kind of expedient but all to no avail. Finally, he took a purse containing ten thousand dirhams, a splendid wardrobe with clothes, a noble horse, and a fine-looking servant. Then he sent the lot to the poet, with a trusted servant, and he wrote a letter in which he swore that nobody except he and the messenger would learn of the matter, adding, "Won't you accept this and spare me and desist from what you are doing to me?" But the poet returned everything and wrote on the back of the letter:[13] [309]

You did as Ibn al-Muhallab did when
he muzzled al-Farazdaq with his abundant generosity![14]
You sent me money, to entice me,
but no, by the Lord of the Even and the Odd![15]
I cannot accept the kind gifts of a man
whom I have clothed with shame forever.

Under these verses he wrote: "But, I swear to God, I shall never say bad things about you again." And he left him alone and did not lampoon him afterwards.[16] This is an amazing story, for someone like him. After all, I was told by Abū

11 Farrāj here adds *ʿalā khilāf*, "contrary to". For the following story and verses, see the version in Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, iii, 79–80; shortened versions are in *Aghānī*, xiv, 92 and al-Shābushtī, *Diyārāt* (ed. ʿAwwād), 280, (ed. & tr. Kilpatrick), 382–385.

12 He was apparently a son of Ḥumayd ibn Qaḥṭabah, a commander who died in 159/775–776. In *Wafayāt* the poet's victim is named as Saʿīd ibn Ḥumayd al-Kātib al-Ṭūsī; in *Aghānī* it is So-and-so (Fulān) al-Ṭāhirī, in *Diyārāt* it is "one of the Ṭāhirids" (*baʿḍ al-Ṭāhiriyyah*). Ibn al-Jarrāḥ, *Waraqah*, 117 says that the poet often lampooned Muḥammad ibn Ḥumayd al-Ṭāhirī; and in al-Qifṭī, *Muḥammadūn*, 279 it is Muḥammad ibn Ḥumayd al-Ṭūsī, who was a general who died in 214/829–830 (see al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, iii, 29).

13 In the MS vss. 2 and 3 and the editions are in reversed order; I have followed the order of *Wafayāt*, iii, 80, which is obviously better (cf. al-Bāhilī, *Dīwān*, 51).

14 This may refer to Yazīd ibn al-Muhallab, see e.g. *Aghānī*, xxi, 345–346, where it is said that al-Farazdaq had composed invective poems on the Muhallabids but, afraid of Yazīd when he became governor of Iraq, produced panegyrics on them.

15 See Q al-Fajr 89:3: *By the Even and the Odd!*

16 For a rather different version see *Aghānī*, xiv, 95–86, where it is related that the poet composed a panegyric on "one of the Banū Ḥumayd" but was rewarded only with criticism of the poem; peeved, al-Bāhilī lampoons him. When Ibn Ḥumayd apologises and sends money, begging him to desist, the poet returns the money and continues his invective.

Ibrāhīm al-Jurjānī, who was told by Isḥāq ibn Shaybah, who said: Rabīʿah al-Rāzī informed me, saying, "I saw Muḥammad ibn Ḥāzim when he asked Isḥāq ibn Ḥumayd ibn Nahīk[17] for a trouser-band. Isḥāq refused to give it; Ibn Ḥāzim then said, 'Abū Yaʿqūb, if you cannot spare a trouser-band, then a single waistband!' "[18] Now is it not amazing that he could act like in the story while he was so avaricious?

17 Not identified.

18 This suggests that a *tikkah* ("trouser-band", sometimes made of silk; see Dozy, *Dictionnaire détaillé*, 95–99) is more valuable than a *nayfaq* (cf. Persian *nēfa*, see Steingass, *Persian-English Dictionary*: "The part of the drawers through which the string passes which fastens them; a breeches-belt or strap").

64 Muḥammad ibn Wuhayb[1] [310]

Aḥmad ibn al-Haytham told me: al-ʿArmazī[2] told me: Isḥāq ibn Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī told me:[3] ‖ Ibn Wuhayb the poet said: "I'll tell you, I swear to God, a {147}
story such as has never come to your ears! That is, if you keep it confidential and don't reveal my identity!" I said, "Tell me!" He said, "It is not anything you have ever heard!" I said, "Why be so difficult about confidentiality? Tell me, and I shall not tell it to anyone as long as I live." He said, "When I was in Mecca during the pilgrimage period, I saw a young woman[4] accompanied by a young boy who was crying. The woman tried to soothe him, but to no avail. She took half a dirham[5] from her mouth and gave it to the boy, who was pacified. I looked at her closely. She had a pretty face, a fleshy body, and extreme elegance. I asked her, 'Are you free or someone else's?' 'Someone else's,' she said, 'My husband

1 Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad ibn Wuhayb al-Ḥimyarī, a poet from Basra, active in Baghdad, contemporary with al-Maʾmūn and al-Muʿtaṣim. He has entries in *Aghānī*, xix, 73–96; al-Marzubānī, *Muʿjam*, 357–358; idem, *Muwashshaḥ*, 458; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, v, 179, which is preceded (178) by an entry on Muḥammad ibn Wahb, erroneously listed as a different poet. Wahb instead of Wuhayb is also found in other sources. See also *GAS*, ii, 517–518.

2 Vowelling uncertain; the *nisbah* is unknown and perhaps one should read al-ʿArzamī or al-Hurmuzī.

3 The following bawdy story told by Ibn Wuhayb is also found, in a somewhat expanded version, in Ibn Abī Ṭāhir Ṭayfūr (d. 280/893), *Balāghāt al-nisāʾ*, 239–243, and Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, vi, 388–391, where the poet is called Ibn Wahb, addressing Isḥāq ibn Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī; this version is also found in some later works: Ibn ʿĀṣim al-Gharnāṭī, *Ḥadāʾiq al-azhār*, 187–190, and al-Suyūṭī, *Tuḥfat al-majālis*, 281–285, where the poet's name has changed to Ibn Abī Wahb. It is essentially the same story that was incorporated, without mentioning either Ibn Wuhayb/Wahb or the narrator, Isḥāq ibn Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī, and in a more burlesque style, in more popular, anonymous texts, not only the 14th-century *al-Ḥikāyāt al-ʿajībah* (60–64, *Ḥadīth al-maflūj*, tr. by Lyons, *Tales of the Marvellous*, 56–59, German tr. by Grotzfeld, in Marzolph [ed.], *Das Buch der wundersamen Geschichten*, 86–91) but also in *Alf Laylah wa-Laylah*, *The Thousand and One Nights*, as "The Barber's Tale of His Second Brother", embedded in "The Hunchback's Tale", see e.g. *Alf Laylah wa-laylah*, ed. Mahdī, 354–357; and see the English translations by Haddawy (*The Arabian Nights*, [i], 272–275) and Lyons (*The Arabian Nights*, i, 223–226). It is said to belong to "the core corpus of the *Arabian Nights*" (Marzolph and van Leeuwen, *The Arabian Nights Encyclopedia*, i, 118). Despite the extensive scholarship on the *Nights*, the story's presence in the works of Ibn Abī Ṭāhir and Ibn al-Muʿtazz book has, to my knowledge, apparently not reached it: "The trick played on the barber's second brother is first reported in Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih's (d. 940) *al-ʿIqd al-farîd*" (Marzolph and van Leeuwen). As for the historical truth of this story, one notes that Isḥāq ibn Ibrāhīm was also the only transmitter, it seems, of the story about the encounter of his father Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī and Iblīs, Satan (*Aghānī*, vi, 231–235).

4 The word *jāriyah* is ambiguous and could be a slave girl, a concubine, or simply a girl or young woman. In *Balāghāt* and *ʿIqd* it is an *imraʾah min nisāʾ Makkah*, "a Meccan woman".

5 *Shiqq dirham*, presumably a copper coin such as the *fals*.

is a man of the Banū Makhzūm. But I have a girl who is free, one with a tight cunt, a pretty face, and a big behind. I can get you all this for a sound yellow one.' 'And what is a sound yellow one?' 'A dinar.' I said, 'That is a deal not of this world, but a deal of heaven!' She said, 'Then make it a deal!' So I gave her a dinar and she took it. I produced a second one and said, 'Spend this on perfume!' She replied, 'She does not touch perfume for men.' I said, 'Then spend it on something else.' She walked off and entered Perfumers' Alley.[6] She ascended to an upper chamber and said, 'Come up!' and I did. She clapped her hands, calling a servant girl of hers, saying, 'Tell So-and-so to be quick and not to dawdle!'
[311] Then a girl appeared who was like the sun. ‖ The woman said, 'Tell Abū l-Ḥasan and Abū l-Ḥusayn to come here!' I said to myself, 'That sounds like ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib, peace be on him!'[7] I looked at the beautiful face of that girl friend of hers, and her sweet looks, and I nearly lost my wits. The woman said to me, 'This is the girl I told you about.' And to the girl she said, 'I have mentioned you to this man. As you see, he is of handsome appearance, clean, and elegant.' The girl replied, 'May God preserve you and favour you!' 'He has given you two dinars as bridal dower', said the woman. The girl said, 'Mummy, have you told him about my conditions?' 'I swear to God,' said the woman, 'I quite forgot!' She looked at me and said, 'I swear to God, she is more valiant than ʿAmr ibn Maʿdī-Karib and prouder than Rabīʿah ibn Mukaddam![8] You cannot be joined with her unless she is inebriated. When she is drunk you shall have what you wish from her.' 'That is easily done', I replied. Then two old men appeared. One of them delivered an oration and the other responded.[9] They married me to the girl and then they left. Food was served and we ate. Then wine was brought; she drank and she poured for me. When the wine had crept into us, she sang these verses:[10]

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6 For a Perfumer's Alley (Zuqāq al-ʿAṭṭārīn) in Mecca, see al-Azraqī, *Akhbār Makkah*, 466.

7 He takes the names to be a propitious omen. ʿAlī was the father of al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn, the latter being the foremost martyr of the Shi'ites. The two men mentioned by the woman are to be witnesses at the marriage contract.

8 On the former, see above, p. 284. He was killed by Rabīʿah ibn Mukaddam, a famous pre-Islamic hero, see e.g. *Aghānī*, xv, 221, Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, i. 116.

9 The "oration" (*khuṭbah*) is here a marriage speech (*khuṭbat nikāḥ* or *khuṭbat zawāj*). See e.g. Qutbuddin, *Arabic Oration*, 378–380.

10 Ibn Abī Ṭāhir Ṭayfūr, *Balāghāt*, 342 and Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, vi, 390 have a different second verse. All three verses are attributed to Qays al-Majnūn (Majnūn Laylā) in al-Qālī, *Amālī*, i, 137, al-Ḥuṣrī, *Zahr*, 409, and Majnūn Laylā, *Dīwān*, 197; and to Yaʿqūb ibn al-Rabīʿ, the chamberlain of al-Manṣūr and a poet (see GAS, ii, 616), in al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, xvi, 390; Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, xx, 55; Ibn al-Anbārī, *Nuzhah*, 64. The versions of the story in *Ḥikāyāt* and *Alf laylah wa-laylah* do not contain any verses.

They went to hunt gazelles, but I deem
hunting them taboo for me:
They resemble you, in their necks and eyes,
and therefore I find I owe them protection.

She was keeping the rhythm by striking a baton on an inkwell. I swear to God, I have visited singing girls for thirty years but I never heard any voice more beautiful than hers, nor any song more beautiful than her singing. I almost flew up with emotion. 'Excellent lady,' I said, 'I have never heard such a voice, and I didn't know these verses!' She replied, 'But they have been set to music twice by Maʿbad.'[11] I said, 'My darling, is it as you said?' 'O yes,' she said, 'it is, but this is not the time for it.' When it was evening she stood up and performed the ritual prayer; I also stood up and did the same. I swear to God, I don't know how long I prayed, I was so eager and keen. We turned to ‖ drinking wine again. She drank [312] and handed me some, too. After a while, at night, I said to her, 'My dear, will you allow me to approach you?' 'First get up,' she said, 'and strip. Then walk away and back, ‖ so that I can have a look at you.' I stood up, stripped, and walked. I {148} had an erection. I had no idea what was wanted from me. Then she drummed on the inkwell with her baton and sang, with the most beautiful voice and the most artful singing:[12]

I imagine I can see the stripped man, on whom came down
people's sandals and long sticks.

I did not understand (alas!) what was wanted from me.[13] 'My dear,' I said, 'Is there perhaps a second verse to follow this?' She replied, 'O yes, and you shall hear it soon.' Then she said, 'Walk, so that I can see you before me!' I walked. She said, 'Move to the middle of the room and come close to me!' So I did. Now there was a hole there, covered with reed mats, that opened to the ground floor, unbeknown to me. I put my foot on it, and all of a sudden I found myself standing in Perfumers' Alley. The two old men had lain in ambush for me with their shoes and began to beat me with them until I nearly died, naked and all. Then a voice was heard from an upper window:

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11 Maʿbad ibn Wahb (d. 125/743 or the following year), a famous singer and composer; see e.g. *Aghānī*, i, 36–59, xiv, 116–120 and *passim*.

12 This and the next verse are in *Balāghāt*, *ʿIqd*, and the later compilations (*Ḥadāʾiq al-azhār* and *Tuḥfat al-majālis*), but not found elsewhere.

13 *Balāghāt* and *ʿIqd* have instead: "I said, 'My dear, I don't understand this verse, and I don't think it is the sort of thing that is sung!' ".

If the stripped man had known what we wanted of him,
that stripped man would have run off quickly[14] for us deep into the desert.

I swear to God, Abū Muḥammad, there landed upon my neck blows of sandals, light and heavy, until I was badly bruised. A man turned up, who said, 'Damn you, get yourself to your belongings, let them not warn the authorities about you, or you'll be in trouble!' So I got up, bruised, stripped naked, and I reached my belongings. In the morning, having readied myself to leave with my companions, I made my way to Perfumers' Alley. I looked up, and there I saw the
[313] girl in the upper room. 'Young man,' she said, 'Would you like to come back?' ‖ I replied, 'But not on those conditions!' I asked about her and they said she was a girl of the family of Abū Lahab."[15]

Fine verses by Ibn Wuhayb are the following:[16]

These three died when Muṭṭalib died:
decency[17] died, desire and dread died.
What a marvel: four joined in one shroud,
and Islam and the Arabs to be condoled with his death!
O day of al-Muṭṭalib, you made our eyes weep,
first tears then blood, as long as time lasts.
Now go where morning rainclouds go, as long as they pour
down upon the earth and as long as herbage grows green!

[He[18] composed panegyric poems on al-Ḥasan ibn Sahl, who promised a reward. Afterwards he received something that made him despair. He said,

14 Instead of *la-ḥāḍaranā* I prefer to read, with *ʿIqd*, *la-khāḍa lanā* (cf. also *Balāghāt*: *la-bādaranā*).

15 In *Balāghāt* the girl is named as Ṣafiyyah. Abū Lahab ʿAbd al-ʿUzzā ibn ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib was a paternal uncle of the Prophet. One of the two contemporaries of Muḥammad to be named in the Qur'an, he, with his wife, is cursed in Q al-Masad 111.

16 Attributed (with a different fourth verse) to Diʿbil in al-Jarīrī, *Jalīs*, iii, 155 and Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh*, xvii, 276 (cf. Diʿbil, *Dīwān*, 319–320). Vs. 4 is not found elsewhere. For al-Muṭṭalib ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-Khuzāʿī see above, 431 and 439–441.

17 The edition by al-Ṭabbāʿ has *al-ḥibā'*, "gift, donation", which is suggested by Farrāj in a note, but the MS and all other sources have *al-ḥayā'*, "modesty, decency".

18 The bracketed passage is taken from the *Mukhtaṣar* (ed. Farrāj, Appendix, 447). For a longer version of the anecdote see *Aghānī*, xix, 75–76, where it is al-Ḥasan ibn Rajā' instead of al-Ḥasan ibn Sahl, and where the poet says that al-Ḥasan asked him to count the number of verses in the poem. They are seventy-two, and he is rewarded with 72,000 dirhams.

Our neighbour friend! Being modest[19] while despairing
and patiently milking the world, making encouraging noises:[20]
These things should not cast humiliation
on a noble man, nor make him need other people.
Our neighbour friend! Divining arrows lie,
and success is mostly brought about by despair.

When al-Ḥasan ibn Sahl heard these verses, I got up to return.[21] He asked me, "How did that verse with the arrows go?" I repeated it, and he sent me away with many times more than I had hoped for.]

The quoted verses are also in al-Tanūkhī, *Faraj*, v, 89 and ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī, *Dalāʾil*, 325.

19 I have chosen to read *taʿaffuf*, with all other sources, instead of *taʿallul*.

20 For a more literal translation of *ibsās* ("saying ps-ps", or, as Arabs might say, "bs-bs"), see above, p. 378.

21 There is some confusion here; in *Aghānī* the anecdote is told by the poet himself.

65 Abū Khālid al-Muhallabī[1]

His name is Yazīd ibn Muḥammad and he is a descendant of al-Muhallab ibn Abī Ṣufrah. He lived in Syria and then moved to Baghdad. Ibn Hāmān told me: Abū l-Akhwaṣ al-Kūfī told me, on the authority of a certain state secretary, who said: Abū Khālid al-Muhallabī said to me, "One day I dropped in on a Baghdadi friend of mine, to say hello. Two sons, young men, lived with him. They turned out to be the most foolish of God's creatures. The two began to talk together, saying all kinds of stupid and absurd things, while their father was looking at them, amazed. I wanted to cheer him up and said, 'God be praised! How nicely they talk!' The father replied, 'If you are lying, may God give you the likes of them!'"

Abū l-ʿAbbās[2] says: This Abū Khālid was one of the proficient master poets among the moderns, but he composed very little poetry. Among what we have memorised of it are the following verses:[3]

[314] They said, "Wish for something!" I said, "Food, in peace,
in the Lowland of Murrah,[4] no mud or foul smells,
A lowland where, if a poor man lies down on its soil,
you'll find it the cleanest bed for a king to lie down.
I'll have a virtuous, freeborn wife from God's servants,
who does not harm a neighbour nor violates Islam;
{149} And a saker and a hound if I am strong,
and if I am weak, my tools will be birdlime and nets;
And collared birds flying on a dovecote,
their plumage like sable and fennec fur.
And if guests[5] arrive unexpectedly, there will come to you for them
[from al-Musannāh the best geese and fish,

1 Abū Khālid Yazīd ibn Muḥammad, poet from Basra (according to al-Ṣafadī), active in Baghdad; he was a boon companion of al-Mutawakkil and is said to have died in the 260s (873 or later). He has short entries in al-Marzubānī, *Muwashshaḥ*, 525; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, xvi, 507–508; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xxviii, 421–422. See GAS, ii, 606. His poetry has been collected by Yūnus Aḥmad al-Sāmarrāʾī in *Majallat al-Majmaʿ al-ʿIlmī al-ʿIrāqī*, 32 (1981), 514–583, also in his *Shuʿarāʾ ʿAbbāsiyyūn*, vol. 1.

2 The author, Ibn al-Muʿtazz.

3 Not found elsewhere.

4 Baṭn Murrah (or Mirrah, Marrah), presumably a place name, but not found. There is a Baṭn Marr near Mecca. Murrah is also the name of several tribes (Farrāj's index of tribes refers to this verse).

5 Read *aḍyāfun* (MS and ed. al-Ṭabbāʿ) instead of *aḍāfun* (Farrāj).

And if you have reached the sweets, there will come to you for them
from the market of Zahmān some sticky Barnī dates.][6]
In a dwelling not acquired through illegal practices,
where one has no fear of being apprehended by the governor;
Where its privacy lends itself to devout practices by the devout
and which gives protection from murderous deeds by murderous
people.
Ah, a house such as Time has not supported me with,
and which the celestial sphere has not revolved for me to live in!
Now I have made a wish that is recognised only
by an experienced expert in the good life."

[Admired are his verses in praise of al-Muʿtamid:[7]

When the gifts of Mihrajān are exhausted
what my tongue gives will last for you:
Poems that will fill the ends of the earth with what God
has allowed tongues to expand on.]

6 With the bracketed passage I follow the text of the *Mukhtaṣar* (ed. Farrāj, Appendix, 447, reading with Eghbal *farighta*, not *faziʿta*, in vs. 7). Al-Musannāh and Zahmān are place names mentioned in verses by al-Kumayt ibn Maʿrūf and ʿAdī ibn al-Riqāʿ, respectively (Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-buldān*). Barnī dates are superior quality dates.

7 The parenthesis is taken from the *Mukhtaṣar* (ed. Farrāj, Appendix, 447). Al-Muʿtamid reigned from 256/870 until 279/892. See above, in § 46, where these verses are attributed to al-Ḥusayn ibn al-Ḍaḥḥāk.

66 al-ʿUtbī[1]

Ibn al-Qurashī told me: Abū ʿAbd Allāh al-Umawī told me: al-ʿUtbī said: "When I was going along the road of al-Mirbad[2] one day I saw a beautiful woman. I
[315] followed her and asked her, ‖ 'Servant of God, do you have a husband?'[3] 'No', she replied. I said, 'What do you think of me?' She came closer to me and said, 'My hair is grey.' So I turned away from her. When I walked away, she called out to me, 'Hey man, come back!' So I went back. She lifted her veil and I saw hair black as a raven, which left me wondering. Then she said, 'We dislike in you what you disliked in us.'"

Among the verses by al-ʿUtbī on this topic that we have memorised are these:[4]

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1 Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Muḥammad ibn ʿUbayd Allāh ibn ʿAmr al-ʿUtbī, a descendant of Umayyah, the eponymous ancestor of the Umayyads (his *nisbah* refers to Muʿāwiyah's brother ʿUtbah), a poet from Basra, also a transmitter of poetry and reports; nicknamed al-Shiqirrāq (the Kingfisher) because of his colourfully dyed hair and his ruddy face, as al-Marzubānī says. He is said to have written several books, among them *Ashʿār al-nisāʾ allātī aḥbabna thumma abghaḍna* (*Poems of Women who Loved, Then Hated*), *Ashʿār al-Aʿārīb* (*Poems of the Bedouin Arabs*) and a book called *al-Akhbār wa-l-ashʿār* (*Reports and Poems*) or *al-Nawādir* (*Anecdotes*), often quoted in *Aghānī*. He has entries in Ibn Qutaybah, *Maʿārif*, 538; al-Marzubānī, *Muʿjam*, 356–357 (where parts of his elegies are quoted for his six sons who died of the plague in 229/843–844); Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, i, 377–378; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, iii, 562–564; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, iv, 398–400 (where he is called "the well-known Basran poet" and is said to have died in 228/842–843); al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, iv, 3. See *EI2*, x, 945–946 (J.E. Montgomery); *GAS*, xvi, 316–317 (he has no entry as a poet in vol. ii, but is mentioned there several times).

2 See above, p. 295. For the following, compare the version in ps.-al-Jāḥiẓ, *Maḥāsin*, 231.

3 The MS has *hal laki fī zawj* ("Would you like a husband?"), emended by Farrāj to *hal laki min zawj* (as in the *Mukhtaṣar*).

4 Farrāj says that the five following verses together with the introductory words of the following piece, absent from the MS, are required by the context. He does not give his source, but they have apparently been supplied from Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, iv, 399 (al-Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān*, ii, 183–184 has a slightly different version). Farrāj's text (followed by al-Ṭabbāʿ) has in fact only vss. 1–4, and I have added a translation of the fifth. Vss. 1–2 are in *Aghānī*, xiv, 201; al-Marzubānī, *Muʿjam*, 357; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, iv, 3; in Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, iii, 43 they are attributed to Muḥammad ibn Umayyah (which, strictly speaking, could refer to al-ʿUtbī but probably is Muḥammad ibn Umayyah ibn Abī Umayyah, see *GAS*, ii, 607); anonymously in al-Washshāʾ, *Muwashshā*, 104. They have also been attributed to ʿUmar ibn Abī Rabīʿah (*Dīwān*, ed. Schwarz, ii, 235, ed. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd, 485, in the section of spurious poetry). See also Shuraydi, *The Raven and the Falcon*, 152–153. The first verse is discussed in some late works on grammar on account of the irregular plural form *raʾayna* ("they noticed") preceding the subject, where a singular would be normal.

[The beautiful women noticed the grey hair showing on my cheeks
and turned away from me with their radiant cheeks.
Yet, whenever they saw me or heard about me, they used
to run and put their eye-sockets to the cracks in the wall![5]
And even if the reins of their eyes were turned away from me,
they would look with eyes like oryx cows and calves.
For I am of people who are praised as nobles,
for whose feet the tops of pulpits are formed,
Caliphs in Islam, leaders in Polytheism:[6]
through them and to them is the vaunting of everyone who vaunts.

Also admired are these verses by him:][7]

When I saw that you are neither a bad sinner
nor a pious renunciant,
And that your enemy is not fearing you,
and your friend not praising you,
I put you up on the market, the slave market,
and called out, "Any one to offer more,
For a man who betrays his friend,
ungrateful for favours and not acknowledging them?"
But not a single man came forward to me
to offer more than one dirham,
Except for one man whose mind had forsaken him
and who was cursed by his own father.
So I sold you to him, without a witness,
fearing that he would return you, with a witness.
I returned home commendably, [316]
and misery descended on the buyer.

5 This verse is quoted and attributed to ʿUmar ibn Abī Rabīʿah in dictionaries s.v. *RQʿ* (e.g. Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿArab*, Lane, *Lexicon*).

6 *Fī l-shirki qādatun*: this sounds rather negative, but the meaning is that before becoming caliphs the Umayyads already were a leading clan before Islam (al-ʿUtbī's ancestor Abū Sufyān was the leader of the Meccans in the Prophet's time).

7 The verses are attributed to "a Bedouin" (*Aʿrābī*) in Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, iii, 452; anonymously in al-Tawḥīdī, *Ṣadāqah*, 180, Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh*, lv, 100; attributed to Ibrāhīm ibn al-ʿAbbās [al-Ṣūlī] in al-ʿAskarī, *Dīwān al-maʿānī*, i, 183; attributed to Abū ʿUyaynah al-Muhallabī or ʿAlī ibn Jabalah in Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, *Bahjat al-majālis*, i, 699.

He also said,[8]

Neither cunning, nor intellect, nor education
will avail you if the divine Decree does not help you;
Nor will slackness or impotence harm you when
the divine Judgement brings you good things.
Your pursuit of what God has decreed will not fail,
whereas striving for what He has not decreed is hard.
Whenever trying hardship befell me
I endured it with fortitude. A noble man endures.
Despite my hardship I rely on God,
though many people, when in hardship, become unbelievers.
Many a man who denied himself delights, wary of
poverty, has not saved anything of his wealth.
Though he may be abstinent, wary of poverty,
this only forestalls poverty, before he becomes poor.

8 Vss. 1–2 are quoted anonymously in Waṭwāṭ, *Ghurar*, 126; vss. 6–7 are attributed to Muḥammad ibn Bashīr in al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdād, *Bukhalā'*, 195. and to Muḥammad ibn Yasīr in Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, *Bahjat al-majālis*, i, 628.

67 ʿUmārah ibn ʿAqīl[1]

He is ʿUmārah ibn ʿAqīl ibn Bilāl ibn Jarīr ibn ʿAṭiyyah. Muslim ibn Riyāḥ al- {150}
Jarīrī told me: Abū Riyāḥ ibn ʿAmr told me: ʿUmārah came from the desert to the towns when his poetry had reached the people. He was the best poet of his time, following the method of his father and grandfather.[2] Every motif that he took he exhausted. His poetry was pure, well-constructed and with fine descriptions. He belonged to a family of poets. He composed panegyrics on caliphs, viziers, nobles, and leading personages. Having earned enormous wealth, he returned to the desert.

ʿUmar told me: ʿUmārah came from the desert to the towns, being ‖ the most [317]
eloquent of people, of a most upright character and intention, devoid of any libertinism and obscenity. But he returned to the desert not believing in one word of God's Book. That was because he fell into the company of some people who professed materialism.[3] Living on intimate terms with them, they corrupted his religion, and afterwards he never returned to matters of religion.

Considered fine are these verses by ʿUmārah ibn ʿAqīl:[4]

The heart's pain on account of Salmā is pain indeed!
Never will it find solace for her.
My soul, in its ignorance, forces me to love her;
but the best of what is allotted to it from her is hope.
Sucking the toothpick with delicate mouth, she has,
with her flirtation, attractiveness and radiance.

1 Abū ʿAqīl ʿUmārah ibn ʿAqīl ibn Bilāl ibn Jarīr (d. between 123/847 and 247/861 at an advanced age), from al-Yamāmah (al-Marzubānī, *Muʿjam*, 78) or the desert near Basra (*Aghānī*, xxiv, 254), active in Baghdad as a panegyrist and satirist, was the son of a minor poet and the great-grandson of the famous poet Jarīr. It is said (*Aghānī*, xxiv, 245) that Basran grammarians accepted his poetry as evidentiary (exceptional for a "modern" poet) and that "pure language (*faṣāḥah*) in the poetry of the moderns ended with ʿUmārah ibn ʿAqīl" (ibid.); on his status as a "rearguard poet" see Alqarni, "Negotiating Abbasid Modernity", *passim*. He has entries in *Aghānī*, xxiv, 244–258; al-Marzubānī, *Muʿjam*, 78–79; al-Nashshābī, *Mudhākarah*, 72–75; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, xiv, 218–219; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xxii, 408–409. His poetry has been collected and edited several times; I have used the edition by Shākir al-ʿĀshūr (hereafter ʿUmārah, *Dīwān*). See *GAS*, ii, 559–560, ix, 300; Bencheikh, "Le cénacle poétique", 42–45.

2 His grandfather Bilāl was also a poet (Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 464), but *jadd* could also refer to any ancestor, including Jarīr.

3 *Yaqūlūna bi-l-dahr*; those believing in *dahr*, "(infinite) time, eternity, Fate", called al-Dahriyyah (Eternalists or Materialists), held materialistic views. See *EI2*, ii, 95–97, "Dahriyya" (I. Goldziher & A.M. Goichon), *EI3*, "Dahrīs" (Patricia Crone).

4 ʿUmārah, *Dīwān*, 29; not found in other sources.

A life of opulence has nurtured her; grey-haired men
praise her and women treat her unjustly.[5]
We try to treat her avoiding ʿAmr(?),[6]
but the treatment and the medicine defied our skill.
The worst reward of one we have rewarded with a favour,
are the Banū ʿAmr, if a reward is possible.[7]
We, the Banū Saʿd, stopped them, and ʿAmr
are slaves, male or female, to Saʿd's stick.

Choice verses by him are also these, [from a long poem on the Commander of the Believers]:[8]

Wealth raises people even if they are obscure,
and poverty demeans[9] people, even if they are noble.
I have seen men, when I saw them,
who left their inheritances to people and were destroyed:
[318] They were not praised for what they left behind
and they only gained with it what they earned.
ʿUmārah, the one of all people most entitled
to be visited by you is the Imam of the nation, the arbiter,[10]

5 Instead of *taʿsifuhā* ("treat her unjustly"), Eghbal suggests reading *taʿshaquhā* ("are in love with her").

6 The MS has *t.ṭ.y.buhā*, read as *tuṭabbibuhā* by Eghbal; Farrāj's text has the incorrectly vowelled *tuṭabbubuhā* and the *Dīwān* has *nuṭabbibuhā*, which I have followed in view of the following *aʿyānā*. With "it" (*-hā*), the soul (*nafs*) of vs. 2 may be meant. The interpretation of *bi-ṣudūdi ʿAmrin* is not clear to me; it seems to refer to tribal invective, cf. the following verses.

7 Translation and interpretation uncertain. Farrāj suggest reading the word that looks like *najarnā* (after *wa-sharru jazāʾi dhī nuʿmā*) as *khabarnā* or *tajarnā*; but *najarnā* is probably correct: al-Zabīdī, *Tāj al-ʿarūs* gives *la-anjuranna najīraka, ay la-ajziyanna jazāʾaka* (with thanks to Abeer al-Abbasi, personal communication). The identity of the Banū ʿAmr and, in the next verse, the Banū Saʿd, is unknown.

8 ʿUmārah, *Dīwān*, 74; not found elsewhere. The parenthesis is taken from the *Mukhtaṣar* (ed. Farrāj, Appendix, 448).

9 The MS reads as *yzry* or *yrzy*; the edition has *yuzrī* ("demeans"), but as Farrāj explains this is unmetrical unless read as the highly irregular *yuzriyu*, as a licence. This strikes me as very unlikely for a poet lauded for his correct language (and one might add that the verb usually continues with *bi-* instead of a direct object). As an alternative, he suggests reading *yazraʾu* ("damages"), which is possible, but I have assumed one should emend to *yazdarī* ("mocks, demeans").

10 The *imām al-ummah* is the Caliph.

Who gives a thousand, whose onslaught is feared,
whose covenant is firm when other nations are treacherous,
And who leads the horses to the frontier, marked,[11]
uncurried, their bits ringing in their mouths.

He also said:[12]

Umaymah visited[13] at night when all eyes were asleep,
the men dishevelled, the camels jaded, parched,[14]
Lightly treading the earth[15] in a pathless desert
where the road marks are obliterated.
They traversed the dark, suffering the hardship of the wastelands
until even the healthy of them looked sick.
God bless that visitor, her apparition![16]
And with a greeting, all good wishes and peace!
Umaymah, if you found out about my character
you would know that I am laudable. cheerful,
Often present at gatherings of the noble, one who honours visitors,
of ample inheritance, often blamed and blaming.[17]
I resemble my ancestors and I have come to be like one of them; {151}
they were the ones who had precedence and a leader.

Admired too are these verses by him, from an elegy on his brother:[18]

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11 Horses or warriors going into battle may wear a token or badge.

12 ʿUmārah, *Dīwān*, 73, not found elsewhere.

13 Reading *ṭaraqat*, following Eghbal and Farrāj, instead of *ṭ.r.f* as in the MS. Vs. 4 shows that the woman does not visit in person.

14 The adjectives must refer to camels, not to "eyes"; apparently something is missing.

15 *Awqaʿna taḥlīla l-yamīni*, seemingly meaning "they caused an oath to be expiated", but see e.g. Lane, *Lexicon* (ḤLL), quoting from Kaʿb ibn Zuhayr's celebrated "Mantle Ode": "*waqʿuhunna l-arḍa taḥlīlū*, meaning *Their falling on the ground is without vehemence*".

16 See above, p. 48 on the nightly phantom or apparition (*khayāl*) of the beloved.

17 *Mulawwamun lawwāmun*: the words normally have negative connotations. Farrāj explains: "here meaning that he who is noble will be blamed on account of it"; compare, in ʿAntarah's *Muʿallaqah*, *hattāki ghāyāti l-tijāri mulawwamū* (see ʿAntarah ibn Shaddād, *War Songs*, ed. & tr. Montgomery, 10–11: "… blamed for his largesse | with the year's stock of wine").

18 ʿUmārah, *Dīwān*, 109; attributed to Muḥammad ibn Bashīr al-Khārijī in *Aghānī*, xvi, 124 (preceded by one verse and followed by another), addressing the bier of a friend of his called Sulaymān ibn al-Ḥusayn. I have translated *akh* as "brother", although with *akhī* Muḥammad Bashīr meant "my friend."

My brother …! On the day of Aḥjār al-Thumām[19] I wept for him;
had my day been destined to come before his, he would have wept for me.
[319] His days took him down, they destroyed him,
leaving for me grief in every place.
If only those who weep for ʿUthmān[20] in the morning
would call out at my grave, likewise, and lament me!
If my tears for him were divided among jinn and mankind,
all created beings would weep hot tears.

19 Aḥjār al-Thumām is a place near Medina, see Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, s.v. Aḥjār al-Thumām, where four vss. of this poem are quoted, attributed to Muḥammad ibn Bashīr.

20 Instead of *yabkī bi-ʿUthmāna* the other sources have *yanʿā Sulaymāna*, "announce/lament Sulaymān's death".

68 ʿAlī ibn al-Jahm al-Sāmī[1]

Al-Shīrāzī told me: Ibn Abī Ṭāhir told me:[2] I heard Abū ʿAbd Allāh ibn Muḥammad ask al-Jahm ibn Badr, who was ʿAlī's teacher,[3] to detain him in the elementary school, because he was angry with him for some reason. He was detained until the afternoon and he found it hard to bear, so he took a piece of a writing tablet and wrote these verses on it to his mother, having it delivered to her by another boy, while his father was unaware:

Mother, dearest mother!
I complain to you of Jahm's harshness!
He let go the boys, all of them,
but I remained confined without having done wrong!

When his mother read the verses she jumped up, grabbing Jahm's beard and tearing out most of it. Jahm went off and released him.

Abū l-ʿAbbās, the poet told me:[4] Ibn Abī ʿArūbah[5] told me: ʿAlī ibn al-Jahm was a proficient, naturally gifted poet who used his tongue as he pleased: he was a lampoonist. He became obsessed with the Ṭāhirids and lampooned them,

1 Abū l-Ḥasan ʿAlī ibn al-Jahm ibn Badr (d. 249/863, killed in battle), of the tribe of Sāmah, a branch of Quraysh; poet active in Baghdad, a panegyrist and satirist, a favourite of caliph al-Mutawakkil (r. 232–247/847–861) until his downfall and exile in 239/853–854. He also composed a long poem in paired rhyme (*urjūzah muzdawijah*) on the history of the caliphs. He has entries in al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, v, 28–31; *Aghānī*, x, 202–234; al-Marzubānī, *Muʿjam*, 140–141; idem, *Muwashshaḥ*, 527–528; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, xiii, 290–292; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, iii, 355–358; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xx, 481–484; Ibn Faḍl Allāh, *Masālik* (ed. al-Jubūrī), xiv, 463–471. See *GAS*, 580–581, ix, 302; *EI2*, i, 386, "ʿAlī b. al-Djahm" (H.A.R. Gibb); *EAL*, 79 (P.F. Kennedy). His poetry has been collected and edited by Khalīl Mardam (hereafter ʿAlī ibn al-Jahm, *Dīwān*).

2 See *Aghānī*, x, 217, ʿAlī ibn al-Jahm, *Dīwān*, 180. In *Aghānī* ʿAlī tells the story, adding that his mother threatened to go out unveiled and free her son; he says that it was the first poetry he composed, though Ibrāhīm ibn al-Mudabbir thought that ʿAlī fabricated the story when he was sixty, to impress people.

3 And, of course, his father.

4 The following story is often told. It is studied in detail in Larsen, "The Crucified Speaks" (where the present version is translated on p. 71). See also *Aghānī*, x, 206–209. Larsen identifies "Abū l-ʿAbbās, the poet" plausibly as Abū l-ʿAbbās al-Nāshiʾ (who has a section below, §125).

5 Larsen has "Saʿīd ibn Abī ʿArūba", but "Saʿīd" is not in the Arabic, and the Hadith transmitter Saʿīd ibn Abī ʿArūbah died in 156/773 or 157/774 (Ibn Qutaybah, *Maʿārif*, 508) and can therefore not be meant here.

claiming they were Rejecters.[6] Among his insinuations are these verses, composed when he was detained:[7]

[320] The Rejecters, the Christians,
and the Muʿtazilites have teamed up to lampoon me,
They have accused me; but how have I offended them
other than seeing them as whoresons?

With "the Rejecters" he meant the Ṭāhirids, with "the Muʿtazilites" he meant the family of Duʾād,[8] and with "the Christians" he meant Bukhtīshūʿ ibn Jibrīl,[9] for he hated him. Ṭāhir became angry with him because of this, and together they kept writing to al-Mutawakkil, scheming against him, until in the end the poet was banished to Khorasan. When he fell into the hands of the Ṭāhirids they crucified[10] him at the Shādhiyākh Gate,[11] [a place of the Ṭāhirids, with their palace and headquarters, with gardens, canals, and elevated spots]. People gathered to watch; he had been crucified naked. Then he said, while on the wooden cross:[12]

They did not set up, in al-Shādhiyākh this Monday
morning, an obscure,[13] unknown person:

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6 i.e., Shi'ites (see above, pp. 58, 349).

7 ʿAlī ibn al-Jahm, *Dīwān*, 84 (in a poem of 29 vss.); *Aghānī*, x, 207.

8 The MS has incorrectly Dāwūd. The reference is to Aḥmad ibn Abī Duʾād (d. 240/854) and his son Muḥammad (d. 239/854), prominent Muʿtazilite judges when Muʿtazilism was in favour, until their fall at the beginning of al-Mutawakkil's reign.

9 Bukhtīshūʿ ibn Jibrīl (d. 257/870), famous court physician.

10 As the story makes clear, this means public exposure here, not a cruel execution method; as stated in *Aghānī*, the Caliph had given a written order to expose him on the cross for a whole day until the evening.

11 See above, p. 270. The following parenthesis is taken from the *Mukhtaṣar* (ed. Farrāj, Appendix, 448).

12 They are vss. 1–2, 6 of a poem of 18 vss. (ʿAlī ibn al-Jahm, *Dīwān*, 171–174; 12 vss. in *Aghānī*, x, 208–209). See Ullmann, *Das Motif der Kreuzigung*, 119–125 (text, complete German translation with commentary and numerous variants and references) and Larsen, "The Crucified Speaks", 81–82 (complete English translation), 90–91 (Arabic). Larsen has doubts about Ibn al-Muʿtazz's story ("The notion that ʿAlī's crucifixion poem was performed *ex tempore* defies credibility; that his performance was what won him rescue from the cross even more so"). But he may underrate both the extemporising abilities of poets and the power of good poetry.

13 I prefer to read *maghmūran* (with Ullmann, Larsen, and most sources) instead of *maghmūzan*, "winked at" (MS and Farrāj).

They erected—God be praised!—beauty that fills their eyes
and respect that fills their hearts.
It does not harm him that his clothes are stripped from him:
a sword is more terrifying when seen unsheathed.

The verses reached the people; so they took him down and honoured him. [A certain secretary of ʿAbd Allāh ibn Ṭāhir[14] heard this. He went to him and said, "That poet that you gave orders to be crucified said such-and-such things!" "Did he say that while on the cross?" "Yes, he did." "That man in incorrigible!", said ʿAbd Allāh, "Take him down and give him a robe of honour!" This was done; they made peace with him and made him a boon companion.]

Some vicious invective verses by him are the following:[15]

Sons of Mutayyam! Do you know about the news?
—But how could a matter than cannot be hidden be hidden?
Here is a riddle for you: Who is your father, sons of diverse parties?
But "To the adulterer the stones!"[16]
Your old man was an important old man,
but there are some doubts about your mother.
Your mother (may God guard her!) was not
secluded behind doors and curtains:
She was singing for young men when they were drinking, {152}
and not secluded from them when they were drunk.
His brothers were noble, leading men
whom the old man could not disobey when they commanded,
Chaste people, except in your houses,
for in places like those outrageous things were done.
People whose parentage goes back to one mother, [321]
but God knows best about their fathers, since they are many!

14 The bracketed passage is taken from the *Mukhtaṣar* (ed. Farrāj, Appendix, 448).

15 ʿAlī ibn al-Jahm, *Dīwān*, 133–134 (vss. 1–7, 12 of a poem of 16 vss.), see also *Aghānī*, x, 212–213, where it is said that verses were composed after the poet had quarrelled with some sons of ʿAlī ibn Hishām, a Persian general of al-Maʾmūn. Mutayyam was a famous and beautiful singing-girl, who was bought by ʿAlī ibn Hishām and became the mother of his children; she has a chapter in *Aghānī*, vii, 293–307.

16 A well-known hadith decreeing stoning as punishment for adultery; see also below, p. 618, for another interpretation of *al-ḥajar*.

Ibn Abī Fanan told me: Abū ʿAbd Allāh al-Yaḥṣubī told me: When ʿAlī ibn al-Jahm, while in prison, had composed his poem addressing al-Mutawakkil:[17]

> She said: "You have been imprisoned!" I said, "My imprisonment
> does not harm me. Which fine sword is never sheathed?"

and then, when he was crucified, said:

> It does not harm him that his clothes are stripped from him:
> a sword is more terrifying when seen unsheathed

then they decided that he was a superior poet. Other poets submitted to him and commanders respected him.

Choice verses by him are the following:[18]

> Such is the soul: whatever you make it bear, it bears.
> Fate has days that are unjust and just.
> It is no shame for a noble man if prosperity ceases,
> but it is shameful if he can no longer bear up.
> The outcome of becoming endurance[19] is becoming;
> the most gracious characteristic of men is behaving graciously.

He also said:[20]

> Release me—may you be released by Him who always
> guards you and averts perdition from you!
> And may He raise you until you would ascend beyond
> the sky, if only the sky could be reached!

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17 ʿAlī ibn al-Jahm, *Dīwān*, 41, the opening of a poem of 28 vss.; cf. ps.-al-Jāḥiẓ, *Maḥāsin*, 54–56; al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, v, 29; al-Bayhaqī, *Maḥāsin*, 540–541; *Aghānī*, x, 213–214, and many later sources. For a translation of the whole poem see Larsen, "The Crucified Speaks", 74–76.

18 ʿAlī ibn al-Jahm, *Dīwān*, 162–163 (vss. 1, 3, 2 of a poem of 26 vss. in praise of al-Mutawakkil); cf. al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, v, 30; *Aghānī*, x, 202 (vss. 1, 3 as a song text); al-Tanūkhī, *Faraj*, v, 64 (vss. 1, 3); al-Māwardī, *Adab al-dīn wa-l-dunyā*, 321.

19 The expression *al-ṣabr al-jamīl* alludes to the Qur'anic *fa-ṣabrun jamīlun* (Q Yūsuf 12:18, 83 and cf. al-Maʿārij 70:5).

20 ʿAlī ibn al-Jahm, *Dīwān*, 78–79 (vss. 5, 11, 13–14 of a poem of 31 vss. addressing al-Mutawakkil while in prison); cf. Ibn Qutaybah, *ʿUyūn*, i, 101; Ibn Dāwūd, *Zahrah*, 214; *Aghānī*, x, 228–229.

Between your Lord (magnified be His name) and you
there is no one but the Prophet of Right Guidance,
And you follow his Sunna
and therein lies your salvation, tomorrow.[21]

Fine verses by him are also these, from his poem with rhyme letter R on al-Mutawakkil:[22]

If we compared you to the full moon when it rises,
and with the sun, one would say, "Sun and moon deserve this!"
And if seven seas were joined with the sea,
they would not reach the bounty of your ten fingers.[23]

Also by him:[24] [322]

If we compared you to the full moon when it rises
we'd wrong you in what is due to you: you are more splendid and perfect.
And we would be unjust if we compared you to a lion in battle,
for you are a better and braver protector of what must be protected.
There is no beneficence of which you have not overstepped the limit,
and no sea but the flood from your hands was superior to it.

He is one of those whose poetry is famous, found among the elite and the common people. It is not our intention to be exhaustive, so what we have quoted should suffice.

21 Reading, with Farrāj and the *Dīwān*, *wa-fīhā najā'uka* instead of *wa-fīmā yuḥāwilu* as in the MS.

22 ʿAlī ibn al-Jahm, *Dīwān*, 147 (and see the *Takmilah* to the *Dīwān*, 222, 254), from a long poem in praise of al-Mutawakkil. The second verse is also in al-Rāghib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ii, 357.

23 For the seven seas plus one, compare Q Luqmān 31:27: *If all the trees on earth were pens and the sea were ink, with seven further seas to supply it, the words of God would not run out.*

24 ʿAlī ibn al-Jahm, *Dīwān*, 165–166, from the same poem quoted above ("Such is the soul …"). Vss. 1–2 are in Ibn Wakīʿ, *Munṣif*, 585 and anonymously in ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī, *Dalā'il*, 500 (where the preceding *qawluhū* cannot refer to al-Mutanabbī as the index wrongly suggests). The first hemistich of vs. 1 was recycled from the preceding quotation, or *vice versa*. The scribe of the MS, confused by this, began to repeat the earlier version, indicating a mistake but not correcting it. I follow Farrāj in following the *Dīwān*.

69 ʿAbd Allāh ibn Abī Umayyah[1]

Aḥmad ibn ʿAlī al-Baṣrī told me: Abū Khālid al-Khazarī[2] told me: Diʿbil ibn ʿAlī, the poet, mentioned that this was a family of poets: Muḥammad ibn Abī
{153} Umayyah, his son ʿAbd Allāh ibn Abī Umayyah, ‖ his son al-ʿAbbās ibn Abī Umayyah, and his grandson [Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī][3] ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Abī Umayyah, who is Abū Ḥashīshah, were all poets, the best poet among them being ʿAbd Allāh ibn Abī Umayyah. He said:[4]

These wine-skins, at the separation, I filled
with seriousness, willingly or unwillingly.
The laughter of separation is the weeping of a haggard lover,
and its weeping is the laughter of a weak, enfeebled man.

He also said:[5]

Leave the obliterated remains
and every abode of yesteryear!
And do not describe Salmā's dwelling:
leave it to any fool,
And don't say, "Laylā's people
have announced their imminent departure".
[323] Loving Muhannā is enough for me;
not for me those departing in litters in the morning.

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1 More properly ʿAbd Allāh ibn Umayyah ibn Abī Umayyah, a member of a family of poets beginning with Abū Umayyah (late Umayyad), followed by his sons Umayyah, ʿAlī, and Muḥammad (who is sometimes confused with his nephew Muḥammad ibn Umayyah ibn Abī Umayyah), and Umayyah's sons ʿAlī, ʿAbd Allāh, and Aḥmad. On this family see Ibn al-Jarrāḥ, *Waraqah*, 50–55; and see GAS, ii, 607–608, Bencheikh, "Secrétaires poètes", 304–308. On Muḥammad and ʿAlī, sons of Umayyah, see *Aghānī*, xii, 144–156 and xxiii, 133–139; on Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn Umayyah (Abū Ḥashīshah al-Ṭunbūrī, d. before 279/892) see e.g. al-Marzubānī, *Muʿjam*, 368–369. ʿAbd Allāh, though called the best poet among them, does not seem to have an individual entry anywhere except here. The poetry of the various members has been collected in *Shiʿr Āl Abī Umayyah*, ed. by ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Rubāʿī.

2 The *nisbah* is unclear in the MS (al-Kh.r.z.mī?). Eghbal reads it as al-Kh.zūmī and suggests reading al-Jazarī; Farrāj's text has al-Khazarī.

3 The parenthesis is added by Farrāj.

4 Not found elsewhere. The interpretation of the verses is not wholly clear to me.

5 Not found elsewhere. The poet, like Abū Nuwās before him, rejects the traditional Bedouin scenes of elegiac love at abandoned sites. Salmā and Laylā are common women's names in early poetry; Muhannā is a boy's name.

He with his flirtation and arrogance,[6]
stingy towards his lover,
Difficult to rein in, headstrong,
with eyes that kill,
Like a twig of the ben-tree, bending
on a piled-up sand-dune,
Nose in the air, proud
of his sleek, fine physique,
And haughtiness, and aloofness,
and kohl-lined, languid glance.
My passion incited him to abandon me,
when he saw I was wasting away.
Someone who envied me heard
some rumours about me,
Though I had not described Muhannā
as a devoted friend eager to be united with his lover;
And I never said, "One day I had
the pleasure of kissing him."
So what, you who are hostile,
have you against this humble captive?
Why am I insufferable to you[7]
and why do you scorn my messenger?
May I not live if this is so
because of an inward hatred.[8]
[So often you cut my soul to pieces
with postponing a meeting!
Give back to my body its spirit
with your honeyed saliva!]

6 I prefer reading, with the *Mukhtaṣar*, *tīh* instead of *jīd* ("neck") as in the MS and the editions.

7 Translation of *mā lī ladayka thaqīlan* uncertain.

8 The MS reads as *lā kuntu in kāna hādhā | hādhā li-baʿḍi*(*n*) *dakhīlī*; Farrāj suggests reading *li-bighḍin dakhīlī*, explaining *bighḍ* as "(someone) hated", on the analogy of *ḥibb*, "beloved". To my knowledge, *bighḍ* is not attested elsewhere and I prefer to read *li-bughḍin*. Farrāj says in a note that the *Mukhtaṣar* has *li-ḥubbi*(*n*) or *li-ḥibbi*(*n*) *dakhīlī*. The following parenthesis is taken from the *Mukhtaṣar* (ed. Farrāj, Appendix, 448).

70 Khālid the Carpenter (*al-Najjār*)[1]

ʿAbd al-Wahhāb ibn Muḥammad al-Baṣrī told me: Muslim ibn ʿUqbah told us: Khālid the Carpenter said to me: "I saw in Basra a girl of mixed blood[2] who
[324] was carrying a small pot containing depilatory paste. ‖ 'Hey, girl,' I said, 'Is there enough in that pot for two cunts?' She replied, 'Yes, if they are small.' "

He also said: Khālid the Carpenter was a prominent poet. He had a vicious tongue, quick to assail people's honour. He composed little poetry on other subjects. [He[3] was one of the best poets among his contemporaries. He was naturally gifted, proficient, eloquent, articulate, his style unconstrained unlike that of some other poets. He composed fine panegyric poems and he was also a poet of invective. Admired is his poem on al-Walīd ibn al-Ṣaqr, with which he lampoons him; he had a foul tongue and there is some obscenity in it:[4]]

I am the Carpenter: I carve every prick
with a thick base and swollen vein.
I shall carve, if I live to do it, without a hatchet,
cocks hard as iron.
Some I'll make one fathom long
and some a bit shorter, but very sprightly,

1 The Arabic has Khālid al-Najjār, *najjār* meaning "carpenter". Today the likelihood that someone called John Carpenter is actually a carpenter is slim, but the absence of further information about Khālid, which indicates that he is of lowly descent and status, makes it plausible that he was a carpenter. He has no entries in the usual reference works, not even Sezgin's *GAS*. As quoted in the introduction (p. 22), Abū Ḥātim al-Sijistānī did not think much of his poetry ("Bad speech, slack of construction; in long poems he is dull-witted, when he is brief he makes an effort"). Al-Marzubānī (*Muwashshaḥ*, 569) relates that Ibn ʿĀ'ishah (on whom see below, § 80) said, "Khālid the Carpenter praised me with some bad poetry. I said to him, 'Damn you, you are no good as a panegyrist, you are good as a lampoonist!' " One verse by him is quoted (*Muwashshaḥ*, 570): "Praise be to God, who has no associate! | My daughter has got pleurisy from craving dates." Two verses attributed to by him are quoted in al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, iii, 479 (year 160/776–777) and al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, iii, 194, but in many other sources (including Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 363–364, Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, vi, 133, and *Aghānī*, xviii, 271–272) they are said to be by Ibn Mufarrigh. There seems to be a confusion with two somewhat similar verses with the same rhyme but different metre attributed to Khālid al-Najjār in Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, vi, 137 (and, to add to the confusion, to Muḥammad ibn Umayyah in al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, ii, 435).

2 *Jāriyah muwalladah*.

3 The bracketed passage is taken from the *Mukhtaṣar* (ed. Farrāj, Appendix, 449).

4 The verses are not found elsewhere. Al-Walīd ibn al-Ṣaqr has not been identified; he is apparently the son of Abū al-Walīd, called "Scarface" (al-Ashajj) in vs. 7 (*al-walīd* could also mean "baby, boy, son").

And I'll give them to Ṭībah, so that she can use them[5]
as her mounts for travelling far.
And she can also carry her son on them,
if one is told to ride with one's slaves.
What a fine wife, when she gets on top {154}
of Scarface Abū l-Walīd's back!
No saddle there, no bridle,
no straw, no fodder set ready.
In one night she covers twenty miles
but she does not travel the way deputations travel.
Al-Walīd is not cut out for that,
even if he were to spend goods newly acquired and inherited.
Abū l-ʿAbbās, beware! Tie up that horse,
which is neither obstinate nor obtuse,
For I hereby demand the fee for this
and for carrying the old woman on the post-horse,
[Thereby protecting her from a hot fire
and him from icy cold.][6]

5 As Farrāj notes, *tattakhidhhā*, as the metre requires, is a licence for *tattakhidhuhā*.
6 The parenthesis is from the *Mukhtaṣar* (ed. Farrāj, Appendix, 449).

[325] **71 [Khālid the Hunter (*al-Qannāṣ*)[1]]**

[He said:[2] Among the poetry by Khālid the Hunter that is admired is his poem that is widely known among people:[3]

Turn off the path, my friends, to remains at al-Qufṣ[4]
now deserted, its inhabitants ostriches and their chicks!
Their traces have been altered by a northerly wind
and drenching downpouring rain, a resounding torrent.
They have become a wasteland; those who lived there moved far away,
intending to go to the land of Najrān.[5]

In the same poem he says:

1 This section is not ín the MS but has been taken by Farrāj (followed by al-Ṭabbāʿ) from the *Mukhtaṣar*; Eghbal gives the text in his notes (pp. 40–41). The poet is called Khālid al-Qannāṣ, but just as in the preceding entry I decided to translate his epithet. The verb *qanaṣa* can refer to "hunting" as well as "shooting". On the poet see GAS, ii, 462–463, where "Ḫālid b. Ṣafwān al-Qannāṣ" has an entry among the poets of the late Umayyad and early Abbasid period; but, as Sezgin says, the poet in Ibn al-Muʿtazz's book must be a "modern" poet. He thinks it is possible that he is the same as the famous Khālid ibn Ṣafwān, who died in the early Abbasid period. It is true that the poem called *al-ʿArūs*, mentioned below, is ascribed to Khālid ibn Ṣafwān al-Qannāṣ. But the well-known orator Khālid ibn Ṣafwān (on whom see above, p. 94) is otherwise neither known as a poet nor called al-Qannāṣ, and he should not be confused with the poet Khālid the Hunter (cf. Hämeen-Anttila, *Portrait*, 77). Khālid the Hunter is mentioned by al-Jāḥiẓ (*Ḥayawān*, vii, 176) as the poet of a strophic poem in paired rhyme on hunting; one couplet on the elephant is quoted; see also Ullmann, *Untersuchungen*, 47–48, 52. He has an entry in al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xiii, 247 (quoting Ibn al-Jarrāḥ, apparently from a lost part of his *Waraqah*), where his full name is given as "Khālid ibn Abān Abū l-Haytham, the poet from al-Anbār, known as al-Qannāṣ (the Hunter), a *mawlā* of Azd", and where he is said to have composed a poem of one thousand lines of *rajaz* on hunting ostriches and a long poem on mosquitoes. See also Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, xv, 135–136 (quoting al-Ṣūlī and al-Jahshiyārī, in the entry on ʿAlī ibn al-Haytham) on Khālid ibn Abān al-Anbārī, called a *kātib* and a poet, not a *qannāṣ*.

2 The subject of *qāla*, "he said", also towards the end of the entry, may still be Muslim ibn ʿUqbah, the transmitter mentioned in the preceding section.

3 Ibn al-Muʿtazz quotes vss. 1, 3, 5, 14, 30, 73–74, 76 of a poem of 78 vss. called *al-ʿArūs*, "the Bride", see al-Maymanī, *Ṭarāʾif*, 102–114, where it is attributed to "Khālid ibn Ṣafwān al-Qannāṣ". Most of it is a catalogue of descriptions of a beautiful young woman, followed by a drinking scene.

4 Al-Qufṣ is a place near Baghdad, suitable for pleasant outings and drinking wine (Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-buldān*).

5 Najrān is a town in Yemen.

The abode of a white-skinned,[6] playful girl,
like the sun in the forenoon, shaped like a jinnee,
White, soft, a young woman, perfumed,
pleasing to the eye, banishment to sorrows …

Then he continues with all verses in this manner,[7] ending thus:

Finally, inebriated by their repeated drinking,
they tilted, not being aware of it, just as a drowsy man tilts,
Slain, without having been slain, ignorant without having turned ignorant,
drunk, but not having deviated from Luqmān's wisdom.[8]
Their cups turned round, their vices slackened,
their natures were tamed by the sound of the lutes.

He said: Mirdās ibn Muḥammad asserted that whoever transmits these verses and does not then compose poetry himself is a hopeless ‖ case. Ibn al-Muʿtazz says: I, too, would say that someone who transmits this and does not compose poetry, may God take him far away![9] [326]

6 Instead of *bayḍāʾ* the text of *Ṭarāʾif* has *ḥawrāʾ*, "with eyes intensely black and white".

7 With "this manner" (*hādhā l-namaṭ*) he refers to the obsessive use of internal rhyme (as in the preceding verse: *bayḍāʾa kharʿa**batin** khawdin muṭayya**batin*** | *li-l-ʿayni muʿji**batin** nafyin li-aḥzānī*, or the next verse: *ḥattā idhā **thamilū** min ṭūli mā **nahilū*** | *mālū wa-mā **ʿaqalū** tamyāla wasnānī*). It is a figure variously called *tajziʾah*, *tasmīṭ*, *tarṣīʿ*, or *tasjīʿ*, and it is applied throughout the long poem except for some verses in the opening section.

8 On Luqmān the sage see above, p. 92. The reference to his *ḥukm* is not entirely clear. Farrāj glosses it as *al-ḥikmah*, "wisdom" (for which Luqmān was known), but *ḥukm* normally means "judgement, ruling".

9 The copyist of the text used by Ibn al-Mustawfī for the *Mukhtaṣar* disagrees (comment quoted by Eghbal and Farrāj): "I have never read a sillier and more uneven poem than that, and I do not understand this description by Ibn al-Muʿtazz, with all his excellence and prominence (…)", and Ibn al-Mustawfī (al-Mubārak ibn Aḥmad) adds that in his view the copyist is right: "There is not one verse in this poem that is not badly constructed, uneven of composition, ugly of diction, and shaky of sense, apart from the opening part as far as 'The abode of a white-skinned, playful girl' (…)."

72 ʿĪsā ibn Zaynab[1]

Muḥammad ibn al-Qāsim[2] told me on the authority of Abū Mājid al-Kūfī: ʿĪsā ibn Zaynab said to me, "I had a servant who was the laziest of God's creatures. Whenever I sent him on an errand it would take him a whole day, and sometimes he would return without having done the job. I often beat him, saying, 'You son of a so-and-so, if you were smart and I sent you to do one job, you ought to do two of them and return promptly!' A bit later I got mildly ill, nothing to be afraid of. I had a friend who was a doctor, so I said to the servant, 'Go to him and tell him to come to us.' His house was rather far from mine, so I didn't doubt he would return late in the day, for I knew that was his habit. But, I swear to God, he had hardly gone from my sight before he was back with the doctor, together with another man I didn't know. I said to myself, he has been very quick; from now on he'll improve! I said to him, 'This is the doctor I know, but who is the other?' He replied, 'He is the corpse washer.' I said, 'Who told you
[327] to fetch the corpse washer?' He answered, 'Didn't you say to me that if I were ‖ smart and you sent me to do a job, I would do two jobs? Well, I did! And I came across your brother and I wanted to bring him as well, but he was busy so he did not come.' I asked him, 'And why did you want to bring my brother?' He said, 'To perform the ritual prayer for the dead.'"

ʿĪsā ibn Zaynab is known as al-Marākibī. Al-Athram states that he was one of the *mawlā*s of the Umayyads. He was a good, proficient poet, one of those who composed good poetry on wine. He drank it incessantly. He composed the following verses:[3]

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1 In the MS the name is wrongly ʿĪsā ibn Abī Zaynab, here and throughout. ʿĪsā ibn Zaynab al-Marākibī has an entry in al-Marzubānī, *Muʿjam*, 98–99, where his mother Zaynab is said to be the daughter of Bishr ibn Maymūn "who gave his name to the arcades called Ṭāqāt Bishr at the Syrian Gate", in Baghdad. His father was ʿAbd Allāh ibn Ismāʿīl, who was in charge of the boats (*marākib*) of al-Manṣūr (see also *Aghānī*, xx, 304–305). The entry on ʿĪsā in al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xxiii, 469 quotes from Ibn al-Jarrāḥ's *Waraqah*, but the extant part of it does not contain the passage. Invective verses by him on the female singer Duqāq are quoted in *Aghānī*, xii, 282, 284. He has no entry in GAS.

2 He is better known as Abū l-ʿAynāʾ (d. at an advanced age 282/896 or the following year), poet and the subject as well as the teller of many anecdotes; he has an entry below (§122). For a somewhat different version of the following anecdote see al-Tawḥīdī, *Baṣāʾir*, i, 79–80, mentioning Abū l-ʿAynāʾ and ʿĪsā ibn Zayd [*sic*] al-Marākibī; instead of a *ghāsil*, "washer (of corpses)", a *ḥaffār*, "gravedigger", is brought. Shorter, anonymised versions are found in later books, such as al-Zamakhsharī, *Rabīʿ*, iii, 24–25, al-Ibshīhī, *Mustaṭraf*, ii, 86; see Marzolph, *Arabia ridens*, ii, 134 for more sources.

3 This and the following three pieces have not been found elsewhere.

His passion alive, his fortitude dead:
being abandoned is to him the end of the world.
Bewildered, all roads blocked to him,
grieving where his ardent love urges him:
If a dying man could bring forward his appointed time,
I would go and dwell in my grave before my death,
All for the love of one whose beauties are superior,
but he resembles the full moon.
[He[4] captivates hearts with the eyes of a fawn,
their lids adorned with magic as kohl.
His hand has been empowered to make one obey him;
you see that he empties it without knowing.[5]
I saw him and was drunk after one glance;
now I would die rather than sober up from drunkenness.

He also said:

A heart that is haggard, insides that dissolve,
a sickness that no physician can probe,
Eyelids eschewed by sleep, so that dreaming
remains a stranger to them:
Cure yourselves with crying, though every tear
dissolves from the heat of the eye.[6]

He also said:

If Thou hast ordained fasting,
then spare us the heat of August![7]
Or else we shall break the fast
and endure the punishment.]

He also said:

4 The bracketed passage has been taken from the *Mukhtaṣar* (ed. Farrāj, Appendix, 449–450).
5 Interpretation of *fa-tarāhu yukhlīhā* unclear.
6 The tears are evaporated by the heat; the verb *dhāba* usually applies to liquefaction ("to melt, dissolve").
7 Apparently composed in a year when Ramadan happened to fall in August (*Āb*).

He took my heart captive with his eyes,
my heart is taken prisoner by his eyes,[8]
To the extent that you would think blindness would strike me;
So cast down your gaze, you who see him![9]
He quivers like a twig when it is fresh,
his master having adorned him with vintage wine.[10]
You would think his lower body is like a sand-dune
and his upper body like a slender branch.

8 The near-identity of the hemistichs looks feeble (Farrāj calls the verse *mutahālik*).

9 The first hemistich is unclear (*ḥattā ḥ.b.sta l-ʿamā fa-yudrikunī*) and I have adopted Farrāj's suggestion, reading *ḥasibta l-ʿamā sa-yudrikunī*; but the second hemistich (*fa-aghmiḍi l-ṭarfa li-lladhī rāhū*) is also unclear to me and I have read *yā lladhī* instead of *li-lladhī*.

10 *Zayyanahū bi-l-raḥīqi mawlāhū*: this looks odd to me but I cannot think of an emendation. *Raḥīq*, usually "vintage wine", can also be "a kind of perfume" (see e.g. Lane, *Lexicon*), which may be meant here (suggestion of Abeer al-Abbasi, personal communication).

73 Muḥammad al-Yazīdī[1] {155}

Muḥammad ibn Isrāʾīl told me: Jaʿfar ibn Ghiyāth al-Mawṣilī told me:[2] Ayyūb ibn Abī Sufyān said: "Muḥammad ibn Abī Muḥammad al-Yazīdī and I were ‖ [328] talking, while drinking wine in some pleasure ground or other, when a white hedgehog came creeping along. We thought it might be hungry, so we threw a piece of bread to it, which it ate. Then we said, how about giving it something to drink! So we put down some date wine in a wide cup. I said to Muḥammad, 'Would you like to compose something on him so that we can trick Saʿīd ibn Salm[3] with it tomorrow?' 'Yes, I will', he said; then he recited:

There was this visitor who came to us after the first part
of the night, when people were still conversing.[4]
We feasted him on pure wine when he came as a visitor
for food, not being aware of us, a bit lost.
Fair of face when in a good mood, but when he scorns
he is protected from wrong by a forest of spears.
You will not see him laying down his arms
ever, whether seeking blood revenge or causing it.

Subsequently we met Saʿīd, who liked the verses when we recited them to him. 'This, I swear to God,' he said, 'is how I like a vigilant man to be!' We had to laugh, so he said, 'You've got something to tell me! Don't leave me before you

1 He is of the same family of poets and philologists as Abū Muḥammad al-Yazīdī (see above, § 48, for references). Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Abī Muḥammad Yaḥyā ibn al-Mubārak al-Yazīdī (d. 214/829) was a philologist and a poet. Like his father he was a tutor of al-Maʾmūn. He has entries in *Aghānī*, xx, 240–248; al-Zubaydī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 76–82; al-Marzubānī, *Muʿjam*, 354–355; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, iv, 651–653; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh*, lxxiii, 282–283; al-Qifṭī, *Inbāh*, iii, 236–240; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, vi, 188–189; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, v, 183–184.

2 For the following see al-Zubaydī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 77–78, where the narrator is called Abū Shamīr; also in al-Qifṭī, *Inbāh*, iii, 238–239, where it is said that the event took place in Marw. For a shorter version of the following (but with an additional verse) see *Aghānī*, xx, 243, where the narrator is called Abū Samīr ʿAbd Allāh ibn Ayyūb. The verses, without the story, are also in Ibn Ḥamdūn, *Tadhkirah*, viii, 313 (in a section on riddles) and al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyah*, x, 165 (in a chapter on animals).

3 Thus in the MS and other sources; the edition by Farrāj, duly followed by al-Ṭabbāʿ, has Saʿīd ibn Muslim, an error. On Saʿīd ibn Salm ibn Qutaybah ibn Muslim al-Bāhilī (d. 217/832), governor of several provinces, see al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, x, 105–107.

4 *Aghānī* adds a verse here: "So I asked 'Abd Allāh, 'Who is this nightly visitor?' | He said, 'A man who has been overtaken by Fate.'"

let me know!' So we told him. He laughed and said, 'Only God knows hidden things!' After this, whenever we went to him, he would smile to us."

Admired are the following verses by him:[5]

Will you depart while the one in love is staying?
Upon my life, this is a grave matter!
If you assist Fate and worries
against yourself, then who can you blame?
I have been wretched because of him, unconsolably,
but when I am wretched he has no mercy.

Also by him:[6]

O moon of al-Karkh![7] Your slave
is drowning in yearning, slain by sicknesses!
The arrow of separation has not missed his heart:
may the right hand of that archer, separation, wither!
I am melting with yearning, and now that my eyelids
are pouring out tears continually,
[329] The longing of this pensive man makes me imagine you;
someone like you presents himself only in one's imaginings.[8]

This Muḥammad was one of the well-known poets, whose poetry is extant and abundant.

5 See al-Marzubānī, *Muʿjam*, 355; al-Zubaydī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 77; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh*, lxxiii, 283 (vss. 1–2); al-Qifṭī, *Inbāh*, iii, 238; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, vi, 188–189; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, v, 183; anonymously in al-Bayhaqī, *Maḥāsin*, 313.

6 Not found elsewhere.

7 See above, p. 235.

8 *Wahhamanīka shtiyāqu dhī fikarin | mithlukumū fī ʿtirāḍi awhāmī*; The edition reads the first word as *wa-hammanīka*, but this looks syntactically odd and would spoil the paronomasia with the rhyme-word. The translation of the second hemistich follows a suggestion by Nefeli Papoutsakis (personal communication).

74 Abū Hilāl al-Aḥdab[1]

Abū l-Najd told me: al-Athram told me: Abū Hilāl's name is Ghuṣayn ibn Barrāq. He was a Bedouin who migrated to Baghdad. He was a proficient, naturally gifted poet. He had sons in Baghdad, one of whom also composed good poetry, but he was not like his father, [because[2] his father was unique, and his verse was collected. Admired among Abū Hilāl al-Aḥdab's poetry is a poem in which he says:[3]

If pebbles suffered as I do, they would split;
or if the wind did, it would not be heard to blow.
And if I asked God's forgiveness every time I thought of you,
no sins would be recorded for me.]

Among the verses by him that we have memorised and selected are these:[4]

Should I go without visiting Laylā anew?
Then I would be badly disloyal to love and union indeed!
Dust in the mouth[5] of my kin, yes, and no bliss to them!
Then my kin would have thoroughly enslaved me.

Verses by him that we find beautiful are the following:[6]

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1 Almost nothing is known about Abū Hilāl al-Aḥdab ("the hunchback") Ghuṣayn ibn Barrāq. He has entries in al-Āmidī, *Mu'talif*, 67–68 (quoting Di'bil's lost book of poets); al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, xiv, 290–291 (where he is called *al-shā'ir al-Madīnī*, "the poet from Medina"); al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xxiii, 621–622 (where he is called Ghuḍayn ibn Barrāq al-Asadī). He was a contemporary of 'Umārah ibn 'Aqīl (see above, § 67), on whom he composed an invective poem (al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xxiii, 621–622, quoting al-Marzubānī's *Mu'jam al-shu'arā'*; but he is not found in the extant part of that book). He has no entry in Sezgin's *GAS*.

2 The bracketed passage is taken from the *Mukhtaṣar* (ed. Farrāj, Appendix, 450).

3 Quoted in al-Āmidī, *Mu'talif*, 67–68, al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, xiv, 291 (with a third verse); attributed to 'Amr al-Barrāq (confusing Ghuṣayn ibn Barrāq with that much earlier poet) in al-Rāghib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ii, 50; attributed to Majnūn Laylā in al-Washshā', *Muwashshā*, 58 (vs. 1 is in al-Majnūn's *Dīwān*, 30) and many later sources. Both verses are also found, as vss. 76–76, in a long poem by Ibn al-Dumaynah (*Dīwān*, 111).

4 Also in al-Āmidī, *Mu'talif*, 68; anonymously in Abū Tammām's *Ḥamāsah* (al-Marzūqī, *Sharḥ*, 1318); al-Mubarrad, *Fāḍil*; 25; Ibn Dāwūd, *Zahrah*, 64. They are also attributed to Majnūn Laylā (no doubt because a Laylā is mentioned in vs. 1), see his *Dīwān*, 177–178. The poet's kin have apparently told him not to visit Laylā.

5 A common curse; see Ullmann, *Flüche*, 88–94 (where this verse is quoted, p. 92).

6 Not found elsewhere. Fātin ("tempting, charming") is normally a woman's name, but the poem uses masculine forms and apparently addresses a boy.

I say, Fātin (love does not spare
the life of a saddened man),
{156} Can you, Fātin, not help me?
For Death's driver urges me on.
Fātin, my tempter! What is enclosed
in my soul is no mean thing.
My lords! Your gazelle has killed me, wrongfully!
Killing me is not done according to the religion.
5 His glances never stopped aiming an arrow from
the bow of passion, shooting at me.
Finally, when his arrow hit me,
he put it down. The least of this would suffice me.
You who make me sick! I have no creature
but you who can cure me.
Yet I cannot, I swear to God, feel safe
from you about my heart, if you aim for it.
[330] But I will be content, my master, short of union,
if you make me hope for it.
My repeated pleasure[7] in you lies in good hopes
forever; for my life is a life of cumin.[8]

This is some of his poetry that is admired and considered good.

7 I follow Farrāj reading *taʿillatī* for what reads as *laʿallanī* in the MS.

8 Compare the verse quoted in Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿArab* (*KMN*): "I have become like cumin (*kammūn*): its roots have died, | while its stems are still green as they wish it"; and a verse by Bashshār: "When you come to him one day, he refers you to tomorrow, | just as cumin promises what it does not fulfil" (*Aghānī*, xiv, 323). For the saying "more failing in keeping one's promise than drinking cumin" see e.g. al-Maydānī, *Majmaʿ*, i, 324, where it is claimed that this makes one thirsty.

75 Abū l-Asad al-Thaʿlabī[1]

Jaʿfar ibn Jundab told me: Abū Zurʿah al-Raqqī told me: Abū l-Asad, the poet resembled al-Akhṭal in his days on account of the quality of his poetry.[2] When Diʿbil lampooned al-Ḥasan ibn Murrah, Abū l-Asad was angry on behalf of al-Ḥasan ibn Murrah, and he sent these verses to Diʿbil:[3]

Diʿbil ibn ʿAlī! You are, in respect to Ḥasan,
like a dog barking from a distance to a lion.
Restrain your tongue from saying things on Ḥasan,
for you have seen someone like me ready for him!

Then Diʿbil wrote to him, "I won't do it again." When al-Ḥasan heard about the matter he sent Abū l-Asad fifty robes.

Among the verses by him that we have memorised and selected are these:[4]

My spirit dwells within my clothes
restively, dissatisfied with my body.
I have grown so thin that there is no longer any passage
in my body for ailments to move in;
Only the motions of passion remain of me
and eyes that pour out tears.
Whenever someone sees me, thinking I have not died,
I make him look again doubtfully, uncertain.
What sickness, and crushing passion, [331]
what hurt that has lodged within my clothes!

1 Abū l-Asad al-Thaʿlabī (or al-Taghlibī) is not known from other sources, apart from al-Marzubānī, *Muʿjam*, 507, where he is merely listed (as Abū l-Asad al-Taghlibī) without further information. He was apparently a contemporary of Diʿbil (on whom see § 45). The *nisbah* al-Thaʿlabī could refer to one of several tribes called Thaʿlabah, or to the trade of selling fox hides; it is easily confused in writing with al-Taghlibī, of the important tribe Taghlib ibn Wāʾil. One notes that al-Akhṭal, to whom he is compared, belonged to Taghlib, but this does not necessarily mean that Abū l-Asad is of the same tribe. He is not the Abbasid poet Abū l-Asad who has an entry in *Aghānī*, xiv, 130–142, and whose name is given as Nubātah ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-Ḥimmānī.

2 On al-Akhṭal, a major poet of the Umayyad period, see above, p. 73.

3 Al-Ḥasan ibn Murrah has not been identified and the verses have not been found elsewhere.

4 Not found elsewhere.

[Few were the times I was together with the hoped-for one,
and together with the one on whom I have made my state dependent.][5]
If they felt me all over with their hands
they would find nothing but my spoils.[6]

Aḥmad ibn Marwān al-Jazarī[7] told me: ʿAbd al-Wārith ibn ʿAmr, of the people of al-Jazīrah, told me: When Abū l-Asad al-Thaʿlabī was a youth he began to compose poetry, and his friends would say, "Really, Abū l-Asad will turn out to be talked about!", for he had delved deeply in the art. He kept at it until people called him "al-Akhṭal the Younger". Not long afterwards he joined the army. He composed poems in praise of princes, who rewarded him amply. He became prominent and possessed a lot of silver, animals, and goods—God knows how much. In the end he acquired estates in al-Jazīrah and was one of the wealthiest people who lived there.

5 This verse is taken from the *Mukhtaṣar* (ed. Farrāj, Appendix, 450). The translation of *wa-waṣlu man ʿallaqtuhū mā bī* is tentative. Perhaps read *waṣlu man ʿulliqtuhū* ("being together with the one I fell in love with"), but then the sense of *mā bī* remains unclear to me.

6 The *aslāb*, "spoils", are often the clothes and weapons taken from a slain man.

7 The editions, following the MS, have al-Kharazī ("the seller of beads"). The *nisbah* could also be read as al-Khazarī or al-Jazarī. The latter, also in the *Mukhtaṣar*, is likely to be correct, as his informant is said to be from al-Jazīrah (northern Mesopotamia), and the poet is said to have acquired estates there.

76 Ibn Shādah, Known as the Effeminate[1]

ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān told me: Bādhinjānah, one of the sons of al-Faḍl ibn al-Rabīʿ,[2] told me: ‖ "One day we were discussing and talking about the four {157}
elements. Ibn Shādah, who was present, said, 'You have said a lot about those elements. But in my view the truth about them is that they are only these: you eat; you drink; you fuck.'[3] So we said, 'But those are three, and the elements are four!' 'True,' he replied, 'My fault! The elements are: you eat; you drink; you fuck; you're being fucked.'"

We have memorised these verses:[4]

By God, how much longer, Munyah,
will love rise and sink?
How can I be saved when I have entered
an ocean of passion without a shore?
You, most able of people to deal with my disease,
such as no people have ever come with:
I have become a jaded animal on the bed of passion,
so thin that it seems I am a mere line.

His poetry contains some subtle, original figures of speech.[5] Among verses we [332]
find charming are these:[6]

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1 Even the name of this obscure poet is uncertain; in the heading of the MS it is spelled Ibn Sādah, it is Ibn Shādah twice in the rest of the entry, and in the *Mukhtaṣar* it is Ibn Shādhah (or Shādhdhah). He is not found in other sources. The word *mukhannath* usually means "effeminate"; see Rowson, "The Effeminates of Early Medina", *EAL*, 548, "Mukhannathūn" (S. Moreh). From the end of the entry on Ibn Shādah, however, it appears that in his case *mukhannath* rather means "wimp" or "softy".

2 For al-Faḍl ibn al-Rabīʿ, the vizier, see above, p. 323. No son (or descendant) of his is known by the name or nickname Bādhinjanah ("Aubergine"). A *kātib* (state secretary) and poet in the time of al-Mutawakkil, called al-Junayd ibn Muḥammad al-Baṣrī, was nicknamed Bādhinjānah (al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xi, 204), but he may be a different person.

3 Here and a few further times Farrāj (or the publisher, or the setter) omits a few diacritical dots of verbal forms of the verb *nāka*, a futile gesture because they do not obscure the original. No such "pointless" censoring of this verb is done elsewhere (pp. 177, 283, 425, 431), or in al-Ṭabbāʿ's edition.

4 Vss. 1, 4 occur in an anecdote in al-Zajjājī, *Amālī*, 98 (cf. also al-Nashshābī, *Mudhākarah*, 244; al-Suyūṭī, *Mustaẓraf*, 15–16), attributed to an unnamed poet in the presence of Yaḥyā ibn Khālid al-Barmakī (al-Faḍl ibn Yaḥyā ibn Khālid in *Mudhākarah*) and a concubine called Khansāʾ (Ḥasnāʾ in al-Suyūṭī's version), who replies with two verses including vs. 2 of Ibn al-Muʿtazz's version.

5 Following Farrāj, reading *badīʿ raqīq* instead of *badīʿ wa-daqīq* as in the MS.

6 Attributed to Mānī l-Majnūn (or al-Muwaswis, see below, §100) in al-Nashshābī, *Mudhā-*

Here I am, so wasted away that I am made to fall
from my sickbed by the breaths of those who visit me!
If a thread could be envious of a human being for being
thin, it would be among those who envy me.

He also said:[7]

Say to the gazelle: You have raised hell,
O my comfort, in my heart,
When I saw you (may I never be deprived
of seeing you!), strutting with your turban on,
Like the sun, its light shining brightly
when it appears from behind a cloud.
My looking at you, with what I feel for you
in my heart, gives you a mark. (?)[8]
In my body there are witnesses
of love, swearers[9] attesting on behalf of me.
You swore an oath that you would kill me,
but murder will make you repent in the end.
The cup of lowliness is mixed for me with nobleness
through the beauty of your face.
Often I am bent on loving you,
and often I felt choked by blame.
I have drunk vintage wine
and was reminded of your saliva by the wine.
And I have despaired of life
just as I have despaired of well-being.

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karah, 258 and al-Rāghib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ii, 52 (vs. 1); anonymously in Ibn Dāwūd, *Zahrah*, 404–405 (but attributed to Mānī in the edition by Nykl, 304). In al-Washshā', *Muwashshā*, 174 the verses are said to have been written by a *jāriyah* called Salm on a brocaded kerchief and sent to a man she loved. Bellmann's German translation (*Das Buch des buntbestickten Kleides*, ii, 159) misreads *ʿuwwādī* as *ʿawwādī* ("Lautenspielers") and makes the lover jealous of the thread instead of the reverse.

7 Not found elsewhere. The "gazelle" is male, as is also clear from vs. 2 (turbans are worn by men).

8 Reading and interpretation of *yuʿṭīka l-walāmah* uncertain; the word *walāmah* is not attested anywhere. I have followed the *Mukhtaṣar*, which has *yuʿṭika l-ʿalāmah*, which could allude to a well-known motif: the beloved's skin is so tender that it is marked, or even wounded, by a lover's glance.

9 *Qasāmah* is a technical term especially in the context of homicide.

Ibn Shādah was not effeminate, but he never lampooned anybody or made insinuations, and for that reason he was nicknamed "the effeminate". He was the most well-bred of people.

[333] 77 **al-Muʿallā l-Ṭāʾī**[1]

Ibn Abī Fanan told me:[2] al-Muʿallā l-Ṭāʾī used to perform one thousand *rakʿah*s in one day and night.[3] He was one of the most frugal of people. One day he said, "Fifty silver dirhams are enough for me for a whole year." His sons found this strange. He never slandered or gossiped about anybody. He was the chastest and most truthful of people, though before he reached that state he had practised as a racketeer and a sharper.[4] He would beg, banter, do mischief, commit highway robbery, and drink wine; but he repented and became as we described before. Among the verses by him we memorised are the following, composed before his repentance but when he had abstained from scandalous mischief;
{158} they are in praise of al-Muṭṭalib ‖ ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-Khuzāʿī:[5]

You, with the sword drawn for sedition
the efforts of which will come to naught,
Seek to strike a blow at Muṭṭalib
if you are longing for death!
You will see a man who quenches spears with blood
that will clothe you with a robe of sudden death.[6]
When he unsheathes his swords angrily
they are too quick for an "I shall" and "would that!"

He also said:[7]

1 Al-Muʿallā (or Muʿallā without article) ibn al-ʿAlāʾ al-Ṭāʾī is mentioned by Ibn al-Jarrāḥ (*Waraqah*, 101) as "a good poet, who came to Iraq", and who was a contemporary of Abū Tammām. His tribal affiliation is rejected in verses by a certain Aḥmad ibn Abī l-Ḥārith: "Muʿallā, you are not from Ṭayyiʾ …" (Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, vi, 138). He is mentioned in *Aghānī*, xii, 102, with eight verses on ʿAbd Allāh ibn Ṭāhir, and xix, 230, with two verses on wine. Some twelve pieces (c. 50 verses) by him in connection with governors and events in Egypt between 194/809 and 210/825 are quoted in al-Kindī, *Wulāh*, 155, 166, 170–171, 174–177, 179, 188, 401, 414, and see the editor's Introduction, 41. He has no entries in the usual works of reference.

2 I follow Farrāj's emendation of *ḥaddathanī al-Muʿallā al-Ṭāʾī ibn Abī Fanan* as in the MS.

3 For *rakʿah*, a part of the ritual prayer, see above, p. 154.# The normal number of obligatory *rakʿah*s in the five daily prayers would add up to 17.

4 *Yataʿāṭā l-futuwwah wa-l-shaṭārah*; on *futuwwah* see also above, p. 376.

5 Not found elsewhere. For three other verses by him on al-Muṭṭalib, governor of Egypt, see al-Kindī, *Wulāh*, 155.

6 I follow Farrāj in taking *fawt* to have the same sense here as *fawāt*.

7 Not found elsewhere.

My eye was happy, seeing the face of a noble woman.
even though the result of my joy was my death.
But though I die of yearning to have another look,
what my eye gained of my life in this world is enough for me.
If my ears hear the speech of her lute,
and the strings speak clearly for her of what she hides,
And she sings like the sound of the cymbal[8] under her uvula, [334]
answered by the flutes in the tones of her nose,
Then her skill combines *rajaz* and singing softly,[9]
and she falls silent, flirtatiously, at the end of a word.
Rosy-cheeked, slender her waist,
temple-locks like scorpions, languid of look;
She dresses in men's robes, rebelliously,
disdaining to put on a necklace or earrings.
[It[10] is as if a willow twig is swaying, set in the earth;
her back bends over waist and behind.
She has a loved one's conceit and a lover's meekness,
the cleverness of a harasser,[11] the eyes of a young gazelle,
The boldness of a lion, the withdrawing of an effeminate,[12]
and the cruelty of a vendor when he is asked a price in the crowd.[13]
I see her with my eyes; then I go away in sorrow,
with my heart as if on hot stones.]

He composed good, charming poetry, but he abandoned poetry when he repented. When asked, "Why don't you compose poetry, since you are unique in your style?" he would answer, "God has given me the recitation of His Book in place of it. [I recite it from beginning to end every day and night[14]]." He never composed any poetry after that.

8 *Ṣanj*, from Persian *chang*, is translated as "cymbal" or "harp".

9 Reading and translation uncertain. The MS seems to have *al-rajzi wa-l-shajji* (*Mukhtaṣar*: *wa-l-saḥji*), which is unclear. Farrāj thinks *shajj/saḥj* may be a corruption of *sajʿ* ("rhymed prose"), but *sajʿ* is not normally sung. I take *saḥj* to be a corruption of *sajḥ* (see Sawa, *Arabic Musical and Social Glossary*, 205: *al-sajḥah: al-naghmah al-munkhafiḍah*). *Rajz* could be a licence for *rajaz*, a simple poetic metre, or the verbal noun ("producing *rajaz*").

10 The bracketed verses are taken from the *Mukhtaṣar* (ed. Farrāj, Appendix, 451).

11 For the unusual word *jammāsh*, see al-Zabīdī, *Tāj* (*JMSh*): *rajul jammāsh*: "a man who harasses women".

12 *Muʾannath* ("made female/feminine", itself a masculine word); close in sense to *mukhannath* (see above, p. 489 note 1).

13 Tentative interpretation of *wa-qaswatu shārin ḥīna ḥukkima fī l-zaḥfī*.

14 The parenthesis is from the *Mukhtaṣar* (ed. Farrāj, Appendix, 451).

78 Durust the Schoolteacher[1]

Al-Jāḥiẓ quoted his poetry as evidentiary verse.[2] Abū Ḥātim al-Asadī told me: Abū Ḥātim al-Aḥwal told me: Durust the Teacher was the shortest man I have ever seen, and the one with the weakest body. Yet he would say, "If I were not a schoolteacher (and a schoolteacher is considered stupid by people),[3] with me being a *mawlā* (and a *mawlā* is not like a genuine member of a tribe), then nobody would be fitter than me to call upon people to hate this dynasty …" (meaning the Abbasid dynasty) "… and I would end their power and obliterate them, until no one would mention the Abbasids, or someone alive would be Durust!" He was a Khārijite and considered their territory as the abode of unbelief.[4] He would say, "They have annulled the religious ordinances and changed
[335] them. But God has said, *Those who do not ordain what God has sent down, ‖ they are the unbelievers*."[5] He was, moreover, the most foolish of God's creatures, but he was eloquent and composed good poetry.

Abū Nizār al-Khārijī told us: Someone told me that he saw Durust the Schoolteacher in the mosque of Basra, engaged in a dispute with various scholars and having the better of them. That was because he had made a thorough study of speculative theology; he was articulate and a tough debater.

We have memorised these verses by him on his neighbours:[6]

I have neighbours who are unbearable,[7] all of them;
the lightest of them is like lead.

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1 Durust (vowels uncertain) al-Muʿallim ("the teacher" or "the schoolteacher") is called Ādharast in the *Mukhtaṣar* and in Ibn Dāwūd, *Zahrah*, 632; al-Ṭabbāʿ also uses this name in his edition of the *Ṭabaqāt*. He has no entries in the usual reference works except al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xiv, 9–10 (as Durust, not Ādharast), which is, as he says, taken from Ibn al-Muʿtazz's *Ṭabaqāt al-shuʿarāʾ*. *Durust* is Persian for "entire, complete, correct"; but if the poet's name is shortened from Ādharast it should perhaps be vowelled Darast (as does Teresa Garulo, "Humor y excentricidad", 434 n. 27).

2 No such verses have been found in the extant works by al-Jāḥiẓ (see also below, note 6). As Jaakko Hämeen-Anttila says ("Short Stories", 37), Durust al-Muʿallim should not be identified as Durust ibn Ribāṭ al-Fuqaymī (mentioned in al-Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān*, ii, 166, 184), who was a contemporary of al-Farazdaq.

3 On this common topos, see Ghersetti, "'Like the Wick of the Lamp'".

4 On the Khārijites see above, p. 280.

5 Q al-Māʾidah 5:44.

6 Quoted in al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xiv, 9; attributed to "Ibn Dūst", said to be quoted by al-Jāḥiẓ, in al-Thaʿālibī, *Thimār*, 668, Dūst clearly being a misreading of Durust/Darast.

7 *Thiqāl* (pl. of *thaqīl*), literally "heavy" but said of people also "insufferable, unbearable, boring".

I said, when I was told they were angry,
"It's the anger of horses at their shining bits."[8]

Widely popular on account of its fine motif are these verses:[9]

We have a companion fond of being contrary,
often wrong, seldom right,
More tenacious than a dung-beetle
and prouder, when he walks, than a crow.

Charming verses in his love poetry are these:[10] {159}

Ah, I swear by the mole on a smooth cheek,
by an eye, languid, flirtatious, kohl-rimmed,
By a figure bending like a branch
on the sand-dune of a heavy behind:
I am the one who is killed among the captives!
Will you lament a man grief-stricken, emaciated?
Passion for you has shown us swords,
and so many have been killed by loving you!
O my eyes, before we part, be generous
with tears, dripping, pouring, flowing, streaming,
On a body wasted by being abandoned by his love,
and, I think, about to perish soon!

8 Apart from the word "shining", this is a quotation of a prose saying in Sībawayh, *Kitāb*, i, 137, also e.g. in al-Ābī, *Nathr*, vi, 173, al-Maydānī, *Majmaʿ*, ii, 67, as an image of pointless rage.

9 Attributed to Ādharast the Schoolteacher in Ibn Dāwūd, *Zahrah*, 632; attributed to Khalaf al-Aḥmar in al-Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥayawān*, iii, 500; Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, *Bahjah*, i, 442; Abū ʿUbayd al-Bakrī, *Faṣl al-maqāl*, 492; Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, xvi, 161; al-Damīrī, *Ḥayāt al-ḥayawān*, i, 308; anonymously in al-Jāḥiẓ, *Tarbiʿ* (ed. Pellat), 7 (tr. Adad, 276; not in ed. Hārūn); Ibn Qutaybah, *ʿUyūn*, i, 24 (vs. 2); al-Maydānī, *Majmaʿ*, ii, 103.

10 Al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xiv, 9–10.

[336] **79 Muḥammad ibn al-Dawraqī**[1]

He was a *mawlā* of ʿAbd Allāh ibn Mālik al-Khuzāʿī.[2] Abū l-ʿAnbas al-Ṣaymarī told me: Ibn Abī l-Dhalfāʾ informed me: Muḥammad ibn al-Dawraqī went to Yaḥyā ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Mālik al-Khuzāʿī when the latter was governor of Isfahan. But Yaḥyā fell short of the expected beneficence, being busy with other matters. After a few days the poet became annoyed with remaining ignored. [There was a man there, a descendant of Harthamah, who gave him some money.][3] Then the poet said,[4]

[I moved to seek compassion
and to lift my debts.]
I was the *mawlā* of the sons of Mālik,
but I have become the *mawlā* of the sons of Harthamah.

Thereupon Yaḥyā had him apprehended and detained in a prison in Isfahan called al-Dulayj.[5] He managed to escape and then he lampooned him with everything foul, not leaving any bad thing unmentioned. One of the verses is:[6]

When they sit with him in private, his two companions say,
"Did Yaḥyā breathe, damn him, or did he defecate?"

It is a long poem, but it is so obscene that we shall omit it. When Yaḥyā was deposed and had gone to Baghdad, he gave the poet many precious objects and other gifts. Then he was appointed governor of Qazwīn. He sent a message to

1 Very little is known about Muḥammad ibn al-Dawraqī, whose father's *nisbah* may refer to Dawraq, a place in Khūzistān, see Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, where also another possibility is given (from wearing a Dawraqī *qalansuwah*, a kind of hood); on the *nisbah* see also al-Samʿānī, *Ansāb*, ii, 501–503. He has an entry in al-Marzubānī, *Muʿjam*, 391 and al-Qifṭī, *Muḥammadūn*, 435–436. Al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, viii, 48 has a short entry on a poet called Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Dawraqī, a contemporary of al-Ḥasan ibn Wahb (d. c. 246/860), who may be the poet's son.

2 He is called ʿAbd Allāh ibn Mālik ibn Yazīd above, p. 129; he is apparently the father of the governor al-Muṭṭalib ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Mālik, mentioned several times above.

3 The parenthesised sentence and the first of the following verses have been added by Farrāj from al-Marzubānī's *Muʿjam* and al-Qifṭī's *Muḥammadūn*. Harthamah is probably Harthamah ibn Aʿyan (d. 200/816), a prominent governor and general under al-Maʾmūn.

4 Al-Marzubānī, *Muʿjam*, 391; al-Qifṭī, *Muḥammadūn*, 436.

5 Yāqūt, *Muʿjam*, lists a place near Isfahan called Dulayjān or Dulaygān, without the article; also al-Samʿānī, *Ansāb*, ii, 490.

6 Not found elsewhere. Two verses with a different rhyme and metre lampooning Yaḥyā are quoted in al-Marzubānī, *Muʿjam*, 391 and al-Qifṭī, *Muḥammadūn*, 436.

Ibn al-Dawraqī, telling him to get ready and travel with him, and promising all kinds of beneficence. The poet went to him and said, "Master, how much will you pay me if I go with you?" "Ten thousand dirhams", said Yaḥyā. "That's a fine thing, by God, how generous!" replied the poet, "You will be paying merely my blood money; for I cannot see myself getting past al-Nahrawān before you kill me![7] God will never see me accepting this, even if you gave me ‖ one hundred thousand dirhams, after everything I said about you!" Yaḥyā answered, "But high-minded, noble people do not act as you say. It is their custom, rather, to forgive, to pardon, to be beneficent and give more, intending on acquiring a good repute." Ibn al-Dawraqī said, "Master, please, no more of this! For I see death eye to eye if I leave with you." Then the governor gave him the ten thousand dirhams in advance, saying, "I swear to God, if you leave I'll be good to you and do you favours." But the poet replied, "I don't dare, for I am afraid that you may get drunk, call for me, and cut off my head!" [337]

Elegising Hāshim ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Mālik he said:[8]

There went with Hāshim what will not return;
he left, when Time was lauded because of him;
A man of which the Days were proud,
and with whom the world always increased.

[And on love:[9]

Be kind to my heart, O my tormentor,
be kind!—But the one who wrongs me has no kindness.
When I see that you will not talk to me
earth and heaven are too narrow for me.]

7 The *diyah*, compensation for homicide or injury, was originally paid with camels of different kinds, but later "it could equally well be paid in gold coinage (1000 dinars) or silver coinage (10,000 or 12,000 dirhams)", see *EI2*, ii, 341 ("Diya" [E. Tyan]). Al-Nahrawān, a town and canal system, lies east of the Tigris, not far from Baghdad.

8 Vs. 1, with another verse, is quoted in al-Marzubānī, *Muʿjam*, 391, al-Qifṭī, *Muḥammadūn*, 436.

9 The bracketed passage is from the *Mukhtaṣar* (ed. Farrāj, Appendix, 451). The verses are attributed to ʿAlī ibn al-Jahm in *Aghānī*, x, 229 and in his *Dīwān*, 155.

80 Ibn ʿĀ'ishah al-Qurashī[1]

His name[2] is ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn ʿUbayd Allāh. ʿĀ'ishah is his mother's name; she is Umm Muḥammad bint ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿUbayd Allāh, of Taym, of Quraysh.
{160} ‖ His teknonym is Abū Saʿīd. Sumayyah Umm Ziyād ibn Abī Sufyān is one of his maternal ancestors.[3] He dwells on this theme, saying,[4]

Alas for the support of Fate
and the fortunes of sons of whores!
[338] But I am related to the Nights[5]
by a descent from Sumayyah that never wanes.

In a lampoon on Ibn Abī Duwād he says:[6]

You are a man bestowing lean and shabby favours,
not good at beneficence to people like me.
Your beneficence does not go beyond a man

1 ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn ʿUbayd Allāh ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥafṣ al-Taymī, known as Ibn ʿĀ'ishah, was from Basra, came to Baghdad, and died in 227/841–842. This minor poet is here said to be called after his mother, who, being from Quraysh, apparently had more illustrious ancestors than his father. He should not be confused with others called Ibn ʿĀ'ishah, such as his grandfather, the genealogist Muḥammad ibn Ḥafṣ al-Taymī, or his son ʿUbayd Allāh ibn Muḥammad (these were descended from ʿĀ'ishah bint Ṭalḥah, of Taym, daughter of a Companion of he Prophet, so it is possible that ʿAbd al-Raḥmān was in fact called after her); or with Ibrāhīm ibn ʿĀ'ishah who plotted against al-Maʾmūn, or with the famous singer Muḥammad ibn ʿĀ'ishah (on whom see e.g. *Aghānī*, ii, 203–241). See *EI2*, iii, 698, "Ibn ʿĀ'isha" (Ch. Pellat). The poet Ibn ʿĀ'ishah has an entry in al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, xi, 540–541.

2 I have adopted Farrāj's reconstruction of the opening, based on the *Mukhtaṣar* and some reference works, because the MS offers a clearly corrupt text.

3 Ziyād ibn Abī Sufyān (d. 53/673), the famous governor under Muʿāwiyah and recognised as Muʿāwiyah's father's son, was born out of wedlock and therefore also known as Ziyād ibn Abīh, "Ziyād, his Father's Son"; on him and his mother Sumayyah see *EI2*, xi, 519–522, "Ziyād ibn Abīh" (I. Hasson).

4 Not found elsewhere.

5 I am not sure of the sense of *amuttu ilā l-layālī*, "I am related to the Nights". The phrase *ibn al-layl*, "son of the night" could refer to someone who is daring or bold; the expression *banāt al-layl*, "night's daughters", refers to worries or troubles. But neither seems to fit here.

6 On Aḥmad ibn Abī Duwād (or Duʾād; the MS has wrongly Dāwūd), the Muʿtazilite *qāḍī*, see above, p. 412 note 16. His son Abū l-Walīd Muḥammad, addressed in the next epigram, succeeded his father; both died, disgraced, in 239/854 and 240/854. The verses are attributed to Abū l-Asad Nubātah ibn ʿAbd Allāh in *Aghānī*, xiv, 132–133 and Ibn Ḥamdūn, *Tadhkirah*, v, 132, and to Ibn ʿĀ'ishah in al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, xi, 541 (vss. 1–2, 4); vss. 1, 4 anonymously in al-Thaʿālibī, *Ādāb al-mulūk*, 225.

in a skin like yours,[7] one of those resembling you.
If you look at the favours you bestow, you will not find
any free man to whom you aspired to confer boons.
So stay safe for a favour,[8] not expected except
for filling the needs of scoundrels.

On Abū l-Walīd, the son of Aḥmad ibn Abī Duwād he said:[9]

Abū l-Walīd (a generous man will sympathise)!
My sword has been pawned, my silk gown has been sold.[10]
My friends are few, few will lend me cash.
This is to inform you of my situation, no importunate begging.[11]

He also said:[12]

When I saw that this age is the age of the ignorant,
And I saw that the intelligent are always duped,[13]
I travelled, mounted on a strong, aged "camel" of Babel's wines,[14]
And I spent the night several stages removed from my intellect.

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7 Farrāj follows the MS, which seems to have *fī mithli mithlika*; I follow the *Mukhtaṣar*, *Aghānī* and *Tadhkirah* in reading *fī maski mithlika* (where editorial notes gloss *mask* as *jild*, "skin"). Al-Khaṭīb, *Tārīkh* has *fī mithli maskika*.

8 Reading and translation uncertain. The MS has *fa-slam li-ghayri ʿaẓīmatin*; Farrāj (followed by al-Ṭabbāʿ) changed the last word to *ṣanīʿatin* (as found in *Ādāb al-mulūk*) without an explanatory note. *Aghānī* and *Tadhkirah* have *fa-slam li-ghayri salāmatin*.

9 For three *rajaz* verses containing versions of vss. 1–2 (with considerable differences), attributed to Ibn ʿĀʾishah, see al-Ḥuṣrī, *Jamʿ al-jawāhir*, 162.

10 *Jamʿ al-jawāhir*: has "tambourine" (*duff*) instead of "sword" (*sayf*) and "Qur'an copy" (*muṣḥaf*) instead of *miṭraf* ("silk gown").

11 In *Jamʿ al-jawāhir* the addressee (unnamed) objects: "You sinner! You pawn a tambourine and sell a Qur'an!" (apparently implying it should have been the other way round).

12 Ibn Qutaybah, *ʿUyūn*, i, 260, said to be recited by Ibn ʿĀʾishah, also al-ʿAskarī, *Dīwān al-maʿānī*, i, 331; al-Jurjānī, *Kināyāt*, 230 ("often recited by Ibn ʿĀʾishah"); Ibn al-Muʿtazz, *Fuṣūl al-tamāthīl*, 8 (attributed to "some unknown man", *baʿḍ al-aghfāl*); anonymously in Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, vi, 346–347; al-Thaʿālibī, *Thimār*, 618 (attributed to "a modern poet"); idem, *Ẓarāʾif*, 94; attributed to al-ʿAṭawī in al-Raffāʾ, *Muḥibb*, iv, 197; vs. 3–4 attributed to Bashshār in al-Murtaḍā, *Amālī*, ii, 138, Waṭwāṭ, *Ghurar*, 174.

13 Instead of *al-maʿrūf* in the MS and the editions, I prefer to follow the version found in all other sources, which have *al-maghbūn*.

14 Bābil, Babylon, is called a "small village" by early Arab geographers. Abū Nuwās (*Dīwān*, iii, 46) speaks of being "taken captive by a Babylonian woman", *sabatnī bābiliyyatun* (meaning wine). Comparing drinking wine to riding a camel is unusual.

And he said, putting the verses in the mouth of Muṣʿab ibn al-Zubayr:[15]

> One may have armpits like the armpits of people,
> but my armpits are counted among the arseholes.
> I have two armpits that pelt those who sit with me
> with something like shit, or with shit.[16]

This is an excellent lampoon. He composed other poems that are all fine.

15 Al-Mubarrad, *Kāmil*, ii, 358, with a third verse; the same Ibn Qutaybah, *ʿUyūn*, iv, 63; *Aghānī*, xvii, 114; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xxv, 614. Muṣʿab ibn al-Zubayr is not (as al-Ṭabbāʿ wrongly says in a note) the brother of ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Zubayr, the "anti-Caliph" during the early Umayyad period, but Muṣʿab ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Muṣʿab al-Zubayrī (d. 236/850–851 at an advanced age), an often-quoted authority on poetry and genealogy; see al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xxv, 612–614.

16 The third verse, found in the quoted sources, is, "It is as if I, between this one and that one, | am sitting between Muṣʿab and Ṣabāḥ." The latter is Muṣʿab's friend Ṣabāḥ ibn Khāqān al-Minqarī. In this verse the speaker is clearly not Muṣʿab, so perhaps Ibn ʿĀʾishah was referring to himself, combining self-mockery with invective on the two others, and Ibn al-Muʿtazz was wrong in saying that the poet put the words in Muṣʿab's mouth (*yaḥkī ʿan Muṣʿab ibn al-Zubayr*).

81 Ismāʿīl ibn Yūsuf al-Baṣrī[1]

Ḥāmid ibn Muḥammad al-ʿAdawī told me on the authority of Abū ʿAlī al-Makkī: Once, Abū l-Saffāḥ al-Anṣārī,[2] ʿAbd Allāh ibn Riḍā, and Ismāʿīl ibn Yūsuf came together; ‖ they were profligates and libertines. They said,[3] "Let's agree to compose poetry describing only wine and nothing else!" And they did so until they died. We have memorised the following poem by Ismāʿīl:[4] [339]

Many a woman selling wine, her tavern being in Qufṣ,[5]
old as Methuselah,[6] dressed in tattered rags,
Have I woken up at dawn, when the Pleiades were sinking,
and the cock mixed its wing-flapping with crowing.
She felt apprehensive, afraid of me, not knowing
that I often make nightly visits to tavern women.[7]
I asked, "Have you got wine that my companions could relish?
You will get your portion[8] from me, all that you wish!"

1 Ismāʿīl ibn Yūsuf al-Baṣrī, a minor poet from Basra who moved to Baghdad, has an entry in al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, ix, 244–245 (which quotes al-Marzubānī), where he is called Ismāʿīl ibn Yūsuf Abū ʿAlī al-Qattāl, "the Killer", or, as in a manuscript variant, al-Fattāk; the two forms are easily confused in writing and have more or less the same sense, which one hopes is figurative in his case. Below there is an entry (§ 113) on another obscure poet called Ismāʿīl al-Fattāk and therefore one wonders if they might be the same person. His dates are unknown; he is said to have composed much poetry and to have lampooned Ibn al-Khabbāzah al-Mughabbir, who exchanged lampoons with Ibn al-Rūmī (al-Marzubānī, *Muwashshaḥ*, 573).

2 Muḥammad ibn Aflaḥ ibn al-Mughīrah Abū l-Saffāḥ al-Anṣārī al-Mawṣilī is listed in al-Dhahabī, *Tadhhīb Tahdhīb al-kamāl*, viii, 47, as being a poet. ʿAbd Allāh ibn Riḍā has not been identified.

3 Following Farrāj's emendation of *fa-qāla* to *fa-qālū*.

4 A version of the poem is in Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān*, iii, 64–65 (called spurious, *manḥūl*, by al-Ṣūlī); for a partial German translation see Wagner, *Abū Nuwās*, 300 and idem, *Grundzüge*, ii, 42–43. Ibn al-Muʿtazz quotes vss. 1, 3–4, 6–8, 13–14, 11, 15 of this version; of the version of the *Ṭabaqāt*, vss. 7, 10, 12 are not in Abū Nuwās's *Dīwān*. Vs. 10 is attributed to Abū Nuwās in al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, v, 248 (cf. Wagner, *Abū Nuwās in der Nebenüberlieferung*, 59). The poem looks as if it was composed in emulation of a poem by Abū Nuwās with the same metre and rhyme (*Dīwān*, iii, 61–64, translated and annotated in Montgomery et al., "Revelry and Remorse").

5 See above, p. 478.

6 A free rendering of *ʿĀdiyyah*, "dating from the time of ʿĀd", an ancient, legendary pre-Islamic Arabian people.

7 Here Abū Nuwās's *Dīwān* continues with "So I said, 'Don't be afraid!' and she replied, 'I thought you were | burglars in the night, wanting to make a nocturnal raid on me!' "

8 Meaning money. I read, with Farrāj, *wa-ḥaẓẓuki*; Wagner, reading *wa-ḥaẓẓiki*, takes it as an oath ("Bei deinem Glück").

She said, "You've found what you desire, an old virgin,[9] pressed
in the time of the man of the gourd and the fish!"[10]
I said, when I saw the glass, shining,
dispelling the darkness, "O wine, hail to thee!"
And I asked, "Nobody has had it but me? How do I get it?"
[She said, "You'll have it!" We said, "Come!"
And I did not stop sipping it, applauding,][11]
together with every man armoured with wisdom, silent.
You can see their faces, when they succumb to drunkenness from it,
shining like bright broad swords.
{161} Sparks strike from it whenever it is mixed,
like meteors pursuing afreets.[12]
At the top of the glass you see eyes,
being the bubbles, like the eyes of bedazzled people.[13]
When the water hits the wine's nose it looks as if
it is mixed with musk, fragrant, crumbled.
[340] So many knights were slain by it, heroes, who used to be
terrifying on a day of fear, now as if in a swoon!

Fine are also these verses:[14]

Light that descended from the mouth of the jug,
with the scent of camphor and the colour of *khalūq*:[15]
Its rays dyed the darkness when it cast
into its reaches bolts of lightning.

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9 Wine (*khamr*) is feminine in Arabic and very often described as a female.

10 Meaning Jonah/Yūnus, cf. his story in the Hebrew bible and Q al-Ṣāffāt 37:139–146. The version in Abū Nuwās's *Dīwān* has instead a somewhat obscure astronomical image (see Wagner, *Grundzüge*, ii, 43).

11 The parenthesis is supplied by Farrāj from the *Mukhtaṣar*.

12 An allusion to Qur'anic passages mentioning rebellious eavesdropping jinnees being pelted with meteors (Q al-Ḥijr 15:17–18, al-Jinn 72:8–9). The demons, *ʿafārīt*, are also in the aforementioned poem by Abū Nuwās, and Ibn al-Muʿtazz himself uses the motif (*shihābun fī ithri ʿifrītī*) in a short Bacchic poem (*Dīwān*, ii, 226).

13 A description of the bubbles, when the wine is mixed with water, is a stock element of Arabic wine poetry.

14 The verses are quoted anonymously in al-Raqīq, *Quṭb al-surūr*, 1058; vss. 1, 4 are anonymously in Ibn Abū ʿAwn, *Tashbīhāt*, 180 and ascribed to Abū Nuwās in al-Irbilī, *Tadhkirah*, 236 but not found in his *Dīwān*; see Wagner, *Abū Nuwās in der Nebenüberlieferung*, 155–156.

15 *Khalūq* is a perfume, also used for make-up, made with saffron.

It was like jet gleaming with its blackness,
then putting on a robe of carnelian,
And with the sparks that flew up and the water
that extinguished it, it looked like a blazing fire.

82 Abū l-ʿIjl[1]

Muḥammad ibn Ḥabīb told me:[2] Abū l-ʿIjl said to me, "I married a woman in Ḥarrān. She gave birth after forty days, so I said to her, 'I say, woman, those who assert that a woman gives birth after nine months are wrong!' She replied, 'Why is that?' I said, 'Because you've given birth after forty days.' 'It is not as you think,' she answered. I asked, 'My darling, how is that?' She replied, 'You have built your wall on someone else's foundation.'"

Abū l-ʿIjl followed the example of Abū l-ʿIbar,[3] often playing the fool in his poetry. Among the verses by him that we have memorised are these:[4]

You who reproach me for being foolish, stop blaming me!
For I feel relaxed, having been busy such a lot,
And now I don't even know, I can testify it,
whether I am travelling or among my family.
Tell me to bring anything you like, and I'll bring its opposite;
if you bring me seriousness I'll bring you jesting.
And if you ask me, "Why is that?" the answer is:
because I have acquired a lot of unintelligence,
[341] So I became an appointed commander in foolishness[5]
and no one is able to dismiss me.
Foolishness brought me mules and servants,
whereas at the time of intelligence my mount was my foot.

[Abū l-ʿIjl[6] was one of the most erudite people, with the most perfect intelligence, one of the best poets, and the wittiest people. He was knowledgeable

1 Virtually nothing is known about Abū l-ʿIjl, who has no entries in the usual reference works; only al-Marzubānī lists him as "Abū l-ʿIjl the libertine (*al-mājin*)" in his *Muʿjam*, 512, without further data. As appears from the present entry he lived during the reign of al-Mutawakkil (r. 232–247/847–861). His extant poetry and anecdotes about him have been collected in Najjār, *Shuʿarā'*, II, iii, 331–339. See also El Outmani, "Anatomies", 18–19. He has no entry in *GAS*.

2 The historian and genealogist Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad ibn Ḥabīb (d. 245/860) was the tutor of Abbasid princes, yet he died the year before Ibn al-Muʿtazz was born, so either someone else is meant or a link in the transmission has been dropped. A short version of the following anecdote is quoted, without names, in al-Rāghib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ii, 141.

3 On him see the next entry, § 83.

4 Not found elsewhere.

5 For the text of Abū l-ʿIbar's mock-investiture of Abū l-ʿIjl (in prose), see al-Rāghib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ii, 426, Waṭwāṭ, *Ghurar*, 196; also, but without mentioning Abū l-ʿIjl, in al-Ābī, *Nathr al-durr*, vii, 291–292.

6 The bracketed passage is taken from the *Mukhtaṣar* (ed. Farrāj, Appendix, 452).

about grammar and unusual vocabulary, and about historical reports. He had studied some philosophy. Despite all this he barely earned a living. When he saw this, he decided to play stupid and play the fool. Before a year had passed he had earned a pretty sum. When al-Mutawakkil visited Damascus Abū l-ʿIjl went to meet him riding a sugarcane,[7] wearing a shoe on one foot and a sandal on the other, with a servant boy in front of him who was carrying a saddle rug[8] and wearing a woollen tunic, with on his head a cap made of papyrus scrolls. Al-Mutawakkil looked at him and laughed. "Damn you," he said, "You are mad!" Then Abū l-ʿIjl recited:[9]

Shoo shoo to intel-telligence!
    It does not befi-fit me.
Those who have it are insol-solvent
    with little rem-remedy.
I am now relieved
    of cen-censurers and rebu-bukers.
I don't care what I say
    or what is said to me.
My stupidity has turned the whole
    world into my ser-servants.
I hope my stupidness will enable me
    to ride a mu-mule,
Thanks to this lord,
    the munificent, the be-benefactor,
The Commander of the Religion of
    the Believers, al-Mutawakkil, to-to me-me.

Al-Mutawakkil burst out laughing and gave orders for him to be given a robe of honour and a riding animal, and he gave him ten thousand dirhams. Abū l-ʿIjl had engraved on his signet ring: "I became stupid, thus I became noble".]

7 On buffoons and entertainers riding a sugar cane or reed (*qaṣabah*) as a hobbyhorse (also *faras al-ʿūd*, *faras al-khayāl*, or *kurraj*) see Moreh, *Live Theatre*, 27–37; on self-made fools such as Abū l-ʿIjl and others, see van Gelder, "Fools and Rogues", 32–36; and see below, § 83 on Abū l-ʿIbar. Another was the fabulously rich jeweller and financier Ibn al-Jaṣṣāṣ (d. 315/927–928), in whose house Ibn al-Muʿtazz had sought refuge after the failed coup, and where he was arrested (*EI2*, iii, 750–751, "Ibn al-Djaṣṣāṣ" [Ch. Pellat]).

8 Apart from "veil", *ghāshiyah* also means, apart from other things, "covering of the horse's saddle" (Lane, *Lexicon*).

9 Not found elsewhere. Like Abū l-ʿIbar (next entry, § 83), Abū l-ʿIjl has distorted several words by reduplicating letters or syllables.

He also said:[10]

They have reproached me, ignorantly, for my foolishness,
but it is more pleasant and sweeter than intelligence.
If they had the same bad luck with intelligence that I had,
they would promptly move over to foolishness.
All people have submitted to me, saying,
"Welcome, Abū l-ʿIjl, welcome to you!"
Thus with it (may you never be without it!) I have become
a lord to be feared, head and foot.[11]

He also said:[12]

Stop blaming me, though meaning well,
acting decently, bestowing a favour![13]
You blame me for being foolish?
At first I was like you;
Then I came to Egypt and its land,
and Syria, then Mosul,
And the towns of al-Jazīrah. And wherever
I dwelt with a living being
{162} I always alighted in his courtyard
with intelligence, in order to become rich;
But, as it turned out, behaving intelligently
brings bad luck. So I resolved to change.
Now look at me: don't you think
that being foolish is better?
Who is to chide me,
that I should be intelligent again?

There are many instances of Abū l-ʿIjl's foolishness and licentiousness.

10 Vss. 1–2, followed by two more verses, is quoted anonymously in Ibn Ḥabīb, *ʿUqalāʾ*, 81–82 and, followed by one verse, in al-Tawḥīdī, *Baṣāʾir*, v, 69 and Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, *Bahjah*, i, 547. Vs. 1, followed by another verse, is attributed to al-Ḥamdūnī (see below, § 93) in Waṭwāṭ, *Ghurar*, 176.

11 The meaning of *wa-raʾsan wa-rijlan* is not clear to me.

12 Not found elsewhere.

13 *Mujmilan mutaṭawwilā* could also mean "comprehensively, prolixly".

83 Abū l-ʿIbar[1] [342]

He is Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad,[2] a Hāshimī, one of the Abbasids. Ghaylān ibn Marrān told me: Manṣūr al-Māhānī informed me, saying that when Isḥāq ibn Ibrāhīm al-Ṭāhirī[3] heard about the dissoluteness and licentiousness that Abū l-ʿIbar was involved with, and his making a show of foolishness, he had him imprisoned. Then Abū l-ʿIbar sent him a letter, writing that he had repented and asking to be released from prison, so that he could let him know that he knew a charm against scorpions, that he would teach it to him, and that there was nothing in the world like it. The governor let him be brought to him and said, "Come on, teach us your charm!" Abū l-ʿIbar replied, "On condition that you assure me you will not trouble me afterwards!" When Isḥāq gave him his assurance, he said, "When you see a scorpion, take a sandal and whack it hard! It will not move again after that." [Isḥāq said,[4] "Is that all you can offer?" Abū l-ʿIbar replied, "Isn't it enough then?"] Then Isḥāq said, "Let him go; he is incorrigible."

Al-Fayḍ ibn Muḥammad told me, on the authority of Abū Rawḥ: Abū l-ʿIbar added one letter to his nickname every year. At first it was Abū l-ʿIbar, and he kept adding to it until had become Abū l-ʿIbarṭaradhrazlawḥamaq-

1 Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAbd al-Ṣamad al-Hāshimī (d. 250/864 or 252/866), a direct descendant of al-ʿAbbās, the eponymous ancestor of the Abbasids, is more famous as a buffoon than as a poet. His teknonym is Abū l-ʿAbbās; he changed it to Abū l-ʿIbar (*ʿibar* means "instructive, warning examples or lessons, admonitions"), by which he became known. He has entries in al-Ṣūlī, *Awrāq*, iii, 323–333; *Aghānī*, xxiii, 196–204; Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, i, 469–470; al-Ābī, *Nathr al-durr*, vii, 291–297; Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, xvii, 122–127; Ibn Shākir, *Fawāt*, iii, 298–301; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, ii, 41–44. Al-Marzubānī, *Muʿjam*, 512 lists "Abū l-ʿAbd" (without further data), which is likely to be an error for Abū l-ʿIbar; the same in al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xix, 343, where "Abū l-ʿAbd al-Hāshimī" refers to Abū l-ʿIbar. He is credited with having written a book on *Booncompanionship and the Characters of Caliphs and Emirs* (*al-Munādamah wa-akhlāq al-khulafāʾ wa-l-umarāʾ*) and another on buffoonery (*Jāmiʿ al-ḥamāqāt wa-ḥāwī l-raqāʿāt*). See *EI2*, *Suppl.*, 26 (J.E. Bencheikh); *EI3* (Khalid Sindawi); *GAS*, xvii, 82; Najjār, *Shuʿarāʾ*, II, iii, 383–387. On Abū ʿIbar and other buffoon-poets see also Bencheikh, "Le cénacle poétique", 48–50; El-Outmani, "Introduction to Arabic 'carnivalised literature'"; idem, "Anatomies of Subversion", 13–16; van Gelder, "Fools and Rogues".

2 In the MS the entry starts, incongruously, with *Wa-Aḥmad Aḥmad ibn Ḥamdūn*, which Farrāj (duly followed by al-Ṭabbāʿ) changed to *Wa-ismuhū Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad*. All sources that give his name, however, call him Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad, which I have adopted.

3 Isḥāq ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Muṣʿab, a nephew of Ṭāhir ibn al-Ḥusayn, was governor of Baghdad, 207–235/822–849. For another version of the following story, where Abū l-ʿIbar offers a piece of good advice, which turns out to be "*Kishkiyyah* (a dish with wheat and milk) only tastes good with *kishk*", see al-Ṣūlī, *Awrāq*, iii, 329, Ibn Shākir, *Fawāt*, iii, 298.

4 The parenthesis is taken from the *Mukhtaṣar* (ed. Farrāj, Appendix, 453).

maq.[5] He was one of the most erudite of people, but when he had seen that foolishness and jesting were more lucrative among his contemporaries, he took to this and abandoned intelligence, becoming a leader in folly.

Aḥmad ibn Abī l-Haytham told me, on the authority of Muḥammad ibn Rajāʾ, who said,[6] One day I had a mind to see Abū l-ʿIbar, so I went to him.
[343] I found him sitting in a washtub[7] containing water. ‖ It was exceedingly hot. He was wearing a hat of sable fur. Around him a number of people were writing down what he was saying. The person receiving his dictation stood up; I sat down to listen. One man said to him, "Abū l-ʿIbar, why is the Tigris broader than the Euphrates, and cotton whiter than truffles?" He replied,[8] "Because a sheep does not have a beak, and a peacock's tail measures four spans." Another asked, "Why should a perfume seller go on to sell felt, and a dealer in junk sell milk?" He answered, "Because it rains in winter, and a sieve does not hold water." Another asked, "Why is every eunuch beardless, and why does water not get cold in June?" He answered, "Because a ship strands and a donkey kicks." Nobody but God knows how many such stupid things he was involved in. He composed praise poems on caliphs and lampooned leading persons with the same feeble stuff. He was made "Commander of the Stupid" and they would consult him on their affairs, like Abū l-Sawwāq, Abū l-Ghūl, Abū l-Ṣabbārah, and other fools of this class.[9] Verses by him are the following:[10]

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5 Unsurprisingly, the exact vowelling and punctuation of this meaningless monstrosity are unknown and other sources have different versions, as *Aghānī*, xxiii, 200: Abū l-ʿIbarṭaradṭayalṭalīrībakbakbak; Ibn Shākir, *Fawāt*, iii, 298: Abū l-ʿIbarṭaradṭabakṭalyārībakbakbak; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, ii, 41: Abū l-ʿIbarṭazadṭabakṭaballarībakbakbak. In the version given by Ibn al-Muʿtazz there is at least a clear reference to foolishness (*ḥamāqah*).

6 Perhaps instead of Muḥammad ibn Rajāʾ it should be Muḥammad ibn Abī Rajāʾ al-Khurāsānī (d. 207/822), who was a judge during the reign of al-Maʾmūn (al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, iii, 188–189). A rather different version of the following is told by ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz ibn Aḥmad in *Aghānī*, xxiii, 199–200 and Ibn Shākir, *Fawāt*, iii, 299–300; it is set in Samarra.

7 *Taghār* or *tighār*, see al-Zabīdī, *Tāj al-ʿarūs*, *TGhR*; cf. Persian *taghāra*, "wash-tub", *taghārī*, "small tub or trough" (Steingass, *Persian-English Dictionary*). In *Aghānī* and *Fawāt* he is sitting on a ladder with a drain or sinkhole before him containing water and sludge; for a translation see El-Outmani, "Introduction", 168.

8 Abū l-ʿIbar's answers use rhyming prose.

9 Abū l-Sawwāq and Abū l-Ṣabbārah (vowelling of both names uncertain) have not been identified; Abū l-Ghūl may not be identical to the Abū l-Ghūl in, § 26 above, who is not described as being a fool or would-be fool.

10 Not found elsewhere. On similar Arabic nonsense poetry see e.g. van Gelder, "Amphigory". Abū l-ʿIbar adds syllables to words, as he did to his name. The reading and translation are necessarily uncertain in parts; the metre (*mujtathth*) is corrupt in several places.

I, I, you, I,
  I am Abū l-ʿIbarannah.
I am the rich one, the foo-foolish one,
  I am the man of madness.
I compose my poetry
  which may come out as insi-sipid.[11]
If you heard my poetry
  on …
For …
  and what …, (?)[12]
Then you would laugh until
  you had to hold your bel-belly.

[More of his buffoonery:[13]

Say to those who seek
  a good and wonderful remedy:
If you are afflicted with mange,
  with woe and perdition,
Abū l-ʿAbbās[14] will give you
  a remedy that will not cure you.
You may treat with it the teeth,
  the foot, the head,
The kidneys, the spleen,
  the throat, and coughing,
And, for a woman, when she pisses,
  and fever when it lasts,

11 The play on words is difficult to translate; *uḥarriru* means "I compose" but suggests here "I heat up", as antithesis with *bardannah*, a nonsense word suggesting "coldness" as well as "insipidity" (with thanks to Abeer al-Abbasi, personal communication).

12 I cannot make much of what looks like *fī l-d.ssi wa-l-watarannah || li-s.q.r.q.r s.q.r.n.f.r | wa-mā tārannah*. Abeer al-Abbasi (personal comunication) may be right in thinking that the poet means "(if you heard my poetry performed) on tambourine (*d.ss* standing for *duff*?) and strings", followed by onomatopoeic words imitating those instruments.

13 The bracketed passage is from the *Mukhtaṣar* (ed. Farrāj, Appendix, 453–454). The verses are not found elsewhere. The poem consists of couplets in paired rhyme and the metre is irregular, some couplets being in *hazaj* metre but others defying analysis. Trying to establish the text of a nonsense poem is fraught with quandaries.

14 Abū l-ʿIbar's original *kunyah*.

And gout in the foot,
  and a deficiency of the mind,
And it is for all pains
  when splitting headache afflicts you.
And if you suffer from consumption,
  …[15]
Then take a handful of ulcerdrug[16]
  and what millstones go round with,
And take the brains of a mouse
  and Donkey's Round,[17]
And take the ways of Ṭīrūyah
  and some pubic hair of ʿAllūyah.[18]
Then, if they urinate,
  from this they will produce dung.]

{163} [344] He composed many amazing poems of this kind. There is no need for us to quote from it extensively, since ‖ there is no usefulness in it.[19] But we do not like to omit anything of what anyone said who praised a caliph in this dynasty, and who is mentioned among poets. What we have quoted from his poetry and anecdotes should suffice.

15 The second half of the couplet is missing.

16 *ʿAqāqirḥā* is either a corruption or intended to be a portmanteau word (*ʿaqāqīr*, "drugs, medicament", with *qarḥ*, "ulcer, sore"). The "millstones" (*al-arḥā*, for *al-arḥāʾ*) in the second half look odd, and perhaps one should read *al-arjā*(ʾ), "(going round) everywhere", in which case one should read *ʿaqāqirjā*. Al-Arhāʾ, however, is also a placename in Iraq (Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, cf. al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, i, 406: Arḥāʾ al-Biṭrīq).

17 Dawwārat al-Ḥimār is a place name (al-Tawḥīdī, *Mathālib*, 334, al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, i, 433, 434).

18 Ṭīrūyah or Ṭayrūyah (thus in Eghbal's notes, p. 44; Farrāj's text has Ṭabrūyah) is either an invented placename (in the light of the preceding), or, more likely, a musician, a real or fictional colleague of the famous ʿAllūyah (d. 236/850); in which case *ṭuruq* ("ways") are "melodic or rhythmical musical modes" (Sawa, *Musical and Socio-Cultural Anecdotes*, 21; idem, *An Arabic Musical and Socio-Cultural Glossary*, 324–325).

19 Following Farrāj, reading *lā nafʿ fīhā* instead of *lā yaqaʿu fīhā*.

84 Manṣūr al-Iṣbahānī[1]

Isḥāq ibn Ibrāhīm al-Karkhī[2] told me: Ibn Abī ʿAwf told me: Abū Dulaf married Suʿād, the daughter of Bādhān and the sister of Manṣūr. When Manṣūr heard about this he did not like it, knowing that Abū Dulaf would soon get rid of her. So he said, with the aim of making Abū Dulaf divorce her:[3]

Suʿād must not boast to us
that the Emir is fondly in love with her,
For she will be returned with hanging head
to her home, unless we'll see him jump.
She's a very good bride, but she
will wet the bed with lust.

Verses by him that we have memorised and selected are these:

Ah, pour me a yellow wine, if you are pouring!
And refresh with wine thirsty heads,
Heads that you see well-protected in comfort,[4]
and confronting calamities in close combat in battle,
Where at times you see soft hands,
and at other times you see the lances of hairpins.[5]

1 Ibn al-Muʿtazz quotes a surprisingly large number of verses by Manṣūr ibn Bādhān al-Iṣbahānī but he gives virtually nothing about his life and origin. He was a minor poet from Persia who does not seem to have entries in other premodern reference works on poets. Ḥamzah al-Iṣfahānī, in his redaction of Abū Nuwās's *Dīwān* (i, 8), mentions that he has seen a collection of his poetry; he calls him "well-known and famous" and notes that his poetry is sometimes ascribed to Abū Nuwās (see e.g. Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān*, v, 28). Verses by him are quoted in various sources, including Ḥamzah's comments in Abū Nuwās's *Dīwān* (e.g. ii, 99, admiring a poem on masturbation by Manṣūr). See GAS, ii, 631. Isfahan and its adjective may be spelled in Arabic in different ways: Iṣfahān(ī), Iṣbahān(ī), Aṣfahān(ī), or Aṣbahān(ī); Farrāj and al-Ṭabbāʿ use the last-mentioned form here and in the next entry.

2 The MS and Farrāj's edition have al-Karkhī, but because in what follows Abū Dulaf is mentioned, whose base was in al-Karaj (see above, p. 257), it is more likely that it should be al-Karajī. Al-Ṭabbāʿ has al-Kūfī.

3 Not found elsewhere, as is the case for all verses quoted in this section, unless specified in a note.

4 I read, with the *Mukhtaṣar*, *fī l-rakhā'*, rather than *fī l-rajā'* (Farrāj); the MS allows either reading.

5 It seems that women's heads and hair are described with martial imagery. *Madārī* is the plural of *midrā* or *midrāh* (Lane, *Lexicon*, DRY: "An iron instrument with which the head is

On Ibn [Abī][6] Nawfal he says:

Your table, Ibn Abī Nawfal,
is, as they assert, the whorl of a spindle,
And the largest of your wooden bowls is made,
out of stinginess, from the smallest of mustard seeds.

He also said:[7]

My soul, do not be afraid of ruin,
for with God is the largest compensation.
[345] If you are satisfied with little you will be happy,
and God will provide for you someone instead of Abū Dulaf.
If my soul is tempted to desire something
that people of nobility fall short of gaining,
And if it attempts a plan that makes me fall short,
then I curb it with modesty and disdain,
Until someone I hope for will bring kindness,
by means of my cunning and subtlety.

He also said:[8]

Abū Dulaf, imprisonment itself is to me nothing
but when a man hopes to gain your generosity.[9]
I see that you do not guide ingratitude that has lost its way,[10]
or miserliness in the things that you consume.

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scratched [...]; a large needle, with which the female hair-dresser adjusts, or puts in order, the locks of a woman's hair [...]; or a wooden instrument which a woman puts into her hair").

6 "Abī" added by Farrāj, on the basis of the following verse; I have not identified him.

7 Vss. 1–2 are attributed in *Aghānī*, xix, 110 to Bakr ibn al-Naṭṭāḥ, upon being angry with Abū Dulaf and leaving him.

8 Vss. 1, 3–4 in al-Thaʿālibī, *Nathr al-naẓm*, 114 attributed to Manṣūr ibn Bādhān; vs. 4 in al-Rāghib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ii, 203 attributed to Bakr ibn al-Naṭṭāḥ.

9 Instead of *ḥabs* ("imprisonment"), *Nathr al-naẓm* has *faqr* ("poverty"), which fits better with what follows. But the equation of *ḥabs* or *faqr* with "a man" is strange. I have read, with *Nathr al-naẓm*, *yāmuluh* (licence for *yaʾmuluh*) instead of *nāʾiluh*, as in the MS and the edition.

10 Translation uncertain. I read, with the MS and al-Ṭabbāʿ's edition, *kufr*, whereas Farrāj's edition has *fikr*.

You are like a drum, with a ringing sound but empty,
devoid of good things, barren inside.
And one of the strangest things is that you were put in command
as a mockery, and that you accepted it.

Choice verses in praise of Abū Dulaf are these:[11]

When his soul speaks to him he carries out its speech,
disdaining the consequences that he sees.
You will never see him except made glorious
with a soul that only strives for difficult pursuits.
He loathes to make a gain unless before it {164}
lies danger of death or the clash of battalions.
When confronted suddenly with cavalry he does not wait
for infantry to catch up with him or squadrons to join him,
But he proudly aims for the ranks
while a cheating coward belches out his soul.
When they say, "Advance!" he will be in front of the ranks, [346]
and when they withdraw he will be found to protect all that flee.
And you will never see him except plunging
into a sea of lances, to gain what he wants.
How fitting, for this man, if he would meet his death,[12]
when he invites it from all sides.
He who clashes with heroes will soon see
his death among spears and swords.

He also said,[13]

It is sad enough that absence has cast us
far away, and that remoteness defeats our pursuits.
If only, now that Time has separated us, one of us
might perhaps become wealthy![14]

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11 Vs. 1 and 4 in al-Rāghib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, i, 14, ii, 78, respectively; anonymously.

12 The MS and the editions have *an t.w.q ḥimāmahū*; Eghbal suggests *an yasūqa*, Farrāj suggests *an yuwaqqā* or *an yuwaffā* (which I have adopted). If one reads *an yuwaqqā*, the sense would be "How fitting that he should be protected from death", but the alternative sounds more heroic and suits the following verse.

13 Vss. 1–3 anonymously in al-Bayhaqī, *Maḥāsin*, 285.

14 Translation of *ʿasā wāḥidun minnā tamawwala ṣāḥibuhū* uncertain. I do not understand Farrāj's comment, explaining *ʿasā* as a verb ("to be rough"); as a particle ("perhaps") it is

But we are forever beset by burdens;
sometimes they rage against us, at other times we rage against them.
He who pursues worldly things according to his desires
will either strike riches or his loved ones will loudly lament.
So hold on to fortitude: I have found it to be
a support against difficult matters.
Do not think that what is foreordained will not happen:
God's decree will certainly pursue it.

Fine are also the following verses:

I am forever either settling or travelling,
all my life made to roam from land to land,
As if, in being made to traverse[15] the lands, I am tasked
with reaching their lengths and breadths.
If, one day, it is decreed for me to return, then I
shall forswear the Department, loans and legal portions,
I'll keep my soul far from matters that will dishonour it,
and I'll stay at home, replete with religion and honour.
If the strength of contentedness will last for me, I'll be happy;
and if not, well, "some evil is easier to bear than another."[16]

[347] On his brother Khushnām he said:[17]

Khushnām has cheated me with his work-horse;
he has so often cheated before!
He always used to quarrel when well-to-do,
but why should he do so when wretched and broke?

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occasionally not followed by *an* (Lane, *Lexicon*, *ʿsy*: *ʾAsā Zaydun yaqūmu*). *Maḥāsin* has *ghanī* (for *ghaniya*) instead of *ʿasā*.

15 I do not follow Farrāj, who takes *taʿbīr* to mean "testing, assaying (dirhams)", here used as a metaphor.

16 A proverb, see e.g. al-Maydānī, *Majmaʿ*, i, 40; the saying is found in verses by early poets (Ṭarafah, see Ahlwardt, *The Divans*, 186, and Abū Khirāsh al-Hudhalī. see al-Sukkarī, *Sharḥ ashʿār al-Hudhaliyyīn*, 1231).

17 The editions, following the MS, wrongly have Kh.thnām; see also below, p. 524. A descendant called Abū Masʿūd al-Khushnāmī Aḥmad ibn ʿUthmān ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Khushnām ibn Bādhān (d. 429/1038), is said to have been governor of Khorasan (al-Samʿānī, *Ansāb*, ii, 372, where he, rather than Khushnām, is wrongly said to have been the brother of Manṣūr ibn Bādhān).

When it became known among people that he was broke
and he was unable to pretend otherwise, he was arrogant.
But let his strident noises not delude you:
he has got nothing, though he swindles.
There is nothing left of him but a shape resembling him.
Woe to him! But what horsemanship in his poverty!
When aiming at insolvency he hit the mark from a bowshot's distance;
If he had shot from four miles[18] he would have hit it, too.

On the family of al-Fayḍ he said:[19]

Don't be proud, ignorantly, of your reputations,
or else you will cause yourselves to suffer death.
When we raided you, and you escaped
only when pardoned or being killed violently,
How many funeral gatherings have we caused to be held among you.
by stabbing spears from the hand of a noble prince,
One whose refuge in battle is he himself {165}
and who does not loathe death among the ranks!
He protects his life in peace, but
he despises it under the shades of swords.

He also said:[20]

Would that, when you took me close to you[21] once,
the first time had been the last, when counted!

18 "From a *farsakh*", "parasang" (some 3,5 miles).

19 They are the descendants of al-Fayḍ ibn Abī Ṣāliḥ Shīrawayh (d. 173/789–790), vizier under al-Mahdī, who was praised by Abū l-Asad Nubātah ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-Ḥimmānī al-Dīnawarī, the poet also mentioned in the next note. The martial tone of the following poem makes it likely that it was composed by an Arab boasting of his tribe, such as Abū l-Asad could do, and not by al-Manṣūr.

20 Vss. 1–2, 7 are attributed to Abū l-Asad in Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 72 (French translation in Ibn Qotaïba, *Introduction*, 11); vss. 1–3, 7, 5–6, 4, 8, with four more verses, are in *Aghānī*, xiv, 133–134, also attributed to him, an invective on Aḥmad ibn Abī Duwād; some verses also in al-ʿAskarī, *Dīwān al-maʿānī*, ii, 203–204; al-Tawḥīdī, *Baṣāʾir*, vi, 87; Ibn Ḥamdūn, *Tadhkirah*, v, 81. Vss. 1–2, 7 are attributed to Abū Zubayd in Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, v, 298 and to Abū l-Aswad in al-Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥayawān*, iv, 262–263 and Ibn Qutaybah, *ʿUyūn*, iii, 189.

21 Most sources have *addabtanī* ("you educated me" or "you chastised me"); *Aghānī* has *idh nubtanī* ("when you afflicted me"); *Ḥayawān* and Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr* and *ʿUyūn* have *ādhantanī*. But the MS seems to have *adnaytanī*, which I have adopted.

You swear an oath that you will never be good to me:
that leaves my liver cold![22]
Cure my heart, for I suffer in it
a wound that I inflicted with my own hand.
[348] May God take me far away, since my soul
carries me to a similar inclination![23]
I recall a time when my soul would not be aroused
by what I have described from anyone.[24]
How could I have made that mistake! May I never be right, and
may I never stand up straight after stumbling!
If my allowance is going to you, then throw it
in the eyes of a snake lurking in wait.
By what I had to put up with from you I am now
called Abū l-Kalb ("Father of the Dog"), not Abū l-Asad ("Father of the Lion").

These verses are also transmitted as being by Abū l-Asad, but the attribution to Manṣūr is more secure.[25] He also said:[26]

You who blame Time
because it lowered your status:
Don't be sad for anything,
for there is an admonition in al-Mughīrah.
If livelihood were acquired through one's intelligence,
God would not have given him a camel turd,
Or if he had had no generosity from Him
a crust of bread would have sufficed him as long as he lives.

22 A "hot liver" denotes grief, a cold one the opposite.

23 Interpretation unclear. Instead of *nafsī* ("my soul") *Aghānī* has *ḥirṣī* ("my greed").

24 *ʿAhdī bi-nafsī wa-laysa yabʿathuhā | hādhā lladhī qad naʿattu min aḥadī*, apparently referring to false promises; I thank Nefeli Paoutsakis for this interpretation. Farrāj says in a note: "The version of *Aghānī* is clearer: *qad ʿishtu dahran wa-mā uqaddiru an | arḍā bi-mā qad raḍītu min aḥadī*" ("I have lived for a long time but I never guessed that I would be pleased with what pleased me from anyone").

25 However, the signature in the last verse together with the evidence from other sources suggests strongly that the poem is by Abū l-Asad, on whom see *Aghānī*, xiv, 130–142, al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xxvi, 702–704. He was connected with al-Mahdī's vizier al-Fayḍ (*Aghānī*, xiv, 134–135, al-Jahshiyārī, *Wuzarāʾ*, 164).

26 This and the three following poems are invectives on al-Mughīrah ibn al-Fayḍ, apparently the son of al-Fayḍ ibn Shīrawayh mentioned above.

On the same person he also said:

A scandal occurred, unexpectedly;
night and day may vanish, but this will not vanish!
There is a girl in the house of al-Mughīrah ibn al-Fayḍ
who is pregnant, but not by him.

He also said on him:

Al-Mughīrah's face is all nose;
it sits above it, like a roof.
The man has a face like a mule's foot,
one could never end describing its ugliness.
From wherever you approach him, you'll see it;
his front, therefore, is like his back.
It is a fortress for him against any calamity; [349]
it will be bestowed on his sons after his death.
Praise poems shun[27] his characteristics,
but it is fitting that his face should be defamed.

Manṣūr said also on al-Mughīrah:

May your mother be bereft of you! She has not protected you
from the lampoons on you that I have made popular.
You even came to me, scolding, so as to stop me
reviling a whoring woman and a whoring bastard.
Al-Mughīrah has asserted that he commands me;
if he is lying I'll fuck the commander's mother.

Good verses by him on the family of Salm are these:[28]

What pleases me, by being a *mawlā* of the family of Idrīs,
your reputations, Banū Salm, are not to be scoffed at: (?)[29]
Unsullied honour, a shirt that is unsoiled, {166}
daily food, without reluctance or frowning:

27 I follow Farrāj's emendation of *khafat* to *jafat*.

28 Āl Salm (or Banū Salm) and Āl Idrīs (vs. 1) have not been identified.

29 *Mā sarranī bi-walā'ī Āla Idrīsī | aḥsābukum yā Banī Salmin bi-manqūsī*: syntax and sense are unclear to me.

They are more pleasing and praiseworthy than disgrace for which I am reviled,[30]
or to live in comfort with a well-filled purse.

He also said:

I am certain of your approval, but
an envious eye cannot hide it from you.
You have turned away from me and now look askance at me
with a glance before which lies a threat.

He said on his brother, who was the town preacher:

I say, on the morning of the Feast, with people present,
while our pulpit of lofty construction rises high,
"Upon my life, it may be high, but it turns
truly lowly by the person who ascends its steps!"
I say when he stands up, braying on top of it,
"You achieve this height and I being a loser?
It is one of the wonders of the world: you ascending the pulpit
and around you a thousand who listen and obey!"
[350] I had never feared any catastrophe like this, today,
that lays me low, and all Muslims with me.

He also said on him:

I said[31] to Khushnām, on his stinginess,
"Dear man, you with the long horns,
If you possessed the earth with all that it contains
you would in any case still be a cuckold."
Base people[32] have an ambition to have his stinginess
and the ambition of those at his home is to caress men.

Manṣūr said on a man he reviles for having been a cupper:[33]

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30 Reading *usabbu*, with Farrāj, instead of *tusabbu*.

31 Reading, with Farrāj, *qultu* instead of the unmetrical *aqūlu* ("I say") in the MS; Eghbal suggests *qūlū*, "Say", which is equally possible.

32 Reading, with Farrāj, al-*andhāl* instead of *al-abdāl* ("substitutes") as in the MS.

33 On the low status of the cupper (*ḥajjām*) see above, §12. Vs. 5 is quoted in al-Rāghib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, i, 286. The mention of "shears" suggests that the cupper was also a barber.

You who now wields the pen:
for a long time you used to rattle the shears!
There was a time when you lived wielding them
more skilfully than anyone walking on foot or cupping.
And when you were not busy with poetry[34]
you shed blood on many a day.
Of many a noble man have you struck the nape;
he lowered his head for you, without revenging himself.
So many submitting necks have you wounded
that would be sacrosanct if anyone but you had aimed for them!
And that with the sword of a teacher who was his knight;
and he who imitates his teacher does not do wrong.
In the end, when he brandished it in order to wield it,
he cured thereby splitting headache and pain.
He may be kept a secret in al-Jibāl,[35]
but he is not secret in Iraq.

On some people who invited him and then stole his coat he said:

Men, you provided a morning meal, but
in exchange for the food you took my coat!
Did you turn my coat into a house steward [351]
in charge of after lunch and dinner?
And why am I the only one to be robbed among the drinking mates?
Were there not others present at your lunch apart from me?
So return—I advise you sincerely—my coat
and do not go too far, lest the lid be lifted!
For if I lampoon you with a verse
I shall raise the curtain from your women's door.

He also said:

Should I give up wine because it is forbidden,[36] {167}
and ask base people for licit drink?

34 A pun may be intended: *qarīḍ* is "poetry", *qaraḍa* means "to clip, cut, shear".
35 On al-Jibāl ("the Mountains", also al-Jabal) see above, p. 55.
36 The editions have *a-atruku l-khamra li-an ḥurrimat*, which is syntactically unusual. The MS has *li-anna*, without suffix; *li-annahā* would be unmetrical. Perhaps it should be emended to *l-khamra llatī ḥurrimat*, "wine, which is forbidden."

I have sworn an oath: I shall never willingly give it up.
Our repentance has just announced its departure.

He also said:

Time has changed you and your past affection:
How ugly is betrayal, O gazelle!
For a time I flattered my enemy, but when finally
I was able to be joined with you,
And what I hoped for had become licit,
and we talked happily together,
Then you turned away from me: no affection,
nothing forbidden, nothing licit!

He also said:

My haram is halal,[37]
just as with ʿĪsā ibn Hishām,[38]
And I must make an animal sacrifice and walk
to the Sacrosanct House,[39]
If ʿĪsā sees a face of ʿAbd
al-Qays in a dream.[40]

He also said:

37 *Ana maḥlūlu l-ḥarāmī*; *ḥalāl* and *ḥarām* mean "licit" and "forbidden", respectively, according to Islamic law. Eghbal wants to read *ana maḥlūlu l-ḥizāmī*, "my belt is untied", but I believe Farrāj is right in not adopting this (one notes that the two preceding pieces also deal with "forbidden things"). See also below, note 39.

38 This ʿĪsā ibn Hishām has not been identified. A century and a half or so after Manṣūr's poem was composed a fictional personage called ʿĪsā ibn Hishām would become the narrator of Badīʿ al-Zamān al-Hamadhānī's famous *Maqāmāt*.

39 *Al-bayt al-ḥarām*, i.e., the Kaaba. *Hady* also means "following the straight path", but the context suggests that it refers to the animal sacrifice as part of the ritual of the Hajj.

40 ʿAbd al-Qays is the name of a tribe, see *EI2*, i, 72–74, "ʿAbd al-Ḳays" (W. Caskel). Abeer al-Abbasi, who prefers to read *ḥirām* (for *iḥrām*, the consecrated state of a pilgrim) in vs. 1, plausibly interprets this poem as an oath sworn by the poet, denying ʿĪsā's claim to belong to ʿAbd al-Qays and saying that he will go on pilgrimage if he is wrong (personal communication).

Do not blame me so much about what will not avail me!
Go away from me! What is preordained by the Pen has happened.[41]
I shall spend money wastefully, whether hard-up or well-to-do;
a generous man is he who gives while being destitute.
I have done right by so many, when others failed to do so,
even when bankruptcy had taken me by the throat!

Manṣūr said on Muḥammad ibn Wuhayb, the poet:[42] [352]

Why did you get yourself a doorman?[43] That is strange, from you!
Don't you know what you are doing?[44] You are an educated man!
Or don't you know that this is a reprehensible and strange act
for someone who composes poetry?
Who will visit you now, reluctantly,
knowing from experience he will be rebuffed?
Leave doormen to those whose doors are fit for one;
having a doorman is a major sin for a poet.

On ʿAlī ibn al-Muhallab he said:[45]

Your body amazes me: it is so small!
But what you gobble up is so much!
I see that you have been sponging all your life,
but your own bread is safe from being broken.
You are found holding a lute to your belly,
turning your throat over its fourth string.
I wish you would let me see part of it,
and may my Lord make your grave big![46]

41 The divine pen (*qalam*), mentioned in Q al-Qalam 68:1 and al-ʿAlaq 96:4, has written all that is destined to happen.

42 On Muḥammad ibn Wuhayb see above, § 64.

43 Complaints about being barred from visiting by a chamberlain or doorman (*ḥājib*) are a common motif, see e.g. *Kitāb al-ḥijāb*, attributed (probably wrongly) to al-Jāḥiẓ (*Rasāʾil*, ii, 25–85).

44 Following Farrāj's suggestion, reading *mā taʾtī* instead of *mā yaʾtī* as in the edition and the MS.

45 ʿAlī ibn al-Muhallab has not been identified.

46 Interpretation of this and several other verses uncertain. I have tentatively read *wa-kabbara* instead of *wa-kaththara*.

And you buggered[47] the one with saffroned cheeks
and you turned to the fire of saffron colour.
He used to deny himself to him
as well as every bliss, in time of bare sufficiency.[48]
When he shows himself, riding a donkey,
it is a lark mounted by a lark.[49]
Vessels for drinking are taboo in your house,
while in other people's houses there are so many!
Sometimes you gargle with wine by way of a toast,
and at other times you gargle with it by way of memento.

[353] He also said:

{168} He has the mug of a pig, the muzzle of a mule,
the chest of a boatman, and the physique of a weaver.
The local jinnees and men complain of his silent farts,
and I fear that even the superior angels are troubled by them.
And even if he were among the people of Hell they would wail
to their Lord, about his incessant silent farting,
And say, "Double torment were easier to bear for us!"
And all of them would cry out appealing to Mālik.[50]

He also said:

Say to the one who returns from pilgrimage:
"You, of all people most in need of a beating with sticks![51]
You haven't given me a sandal or a piece of false myrrh,[52]
as if you came back merely from al-Burj![53]

47 The editions have *w.b.k.t*, but I follow the MS, reading *wa-nikta*. One could, however, also read *wa-bukta*, with much the same sense (the dictionaries give *bāka l-ḥimār al-atān*, "the jack mounted the jenny", cf. vs. 5 which mentions a donkey).

48 Reading (but not quite understanding) *maʿa l-maqtarah*, with Farrāj, for *maʿa l-maqbarah*.

49 *Bi-qunburatin* (emended by Farrāj to *fa-qunburatun*) *fawqa qunburah*. The comparison is unclear to me.

50 Mālik is the chief keeper of Hell; cf. Q al-Zukhruf 43:77 (some translators take *Mālik* not as a name but a noun, "Master").

51 *ʿAfj*, besides "beating with a stick", may also mean "copulation".

52 *Muqlah*, from *muql*, "bdellium", a kind of gum resin.

53 Al-Burj is a town near Isfahan (Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-buldān*).

You are proud to have returned with a cupping tool[54]
and a sandal thong, one of those of the African blacks.
If you had gained a kingdom such as Ṭāhir got,
your saddle-strap would have been severed.[55]
How would it be to you fall over, Abū Jaʿfar,
letting the saddle-pad go first, with the saddle?
You will never be any good after this,
as long as pilgrims come up from a mountain road."

On ʿUqbah ibn Mālik he said:[56]

O sermon, ruined by Mālik!
But more ruinous was the derelict pulpit.
O people of Bakr, give Qāsim a kiss!
Mālik has been put in charge of its police.
The side-post of the pulpit in his hand
is like the pitch-black prick of a donkey.

Abū Dulaf used to say, "Whenever I saw someone on a pulpit holding the side-post with his hand ‖ I could not help thinking of Manṣūr ibn Bādhān's verse, [354]
and almost laughing aloud." Manṣūr was a good poet, especially of invective verse, in which he excelled others.

54 Tentative translation of *ḥajjāmatin*; the word is not attested in this sense (it is unlikely that it means "a female cupper").

55 Ṭāhir is no doubt Ṭāhir ibn al-Ḥusayn, the founder of what became the Ṭāhirid dynasty. The last word, *al-ʾy.r.ṭ.nj* in the editions, defeated the editors; it should be read (with thanks to Nefeli Papoutsakis) as *al-abarṭanj*, for *al-barṭanj*, from Persian *bartang* (Steingass, *Persian-English Dictionary*: "girth") and see Ibn Durayd, *Ṣifat al-sarj wa-l-lijām*, 7: *al-barṭanj: ḥizām yushaddu fawqa l-sarj*. For the added syllable, compare Abarwīz, a common form in Arabic for Persian Parvēz.

56 ʿUqbah ibn Mālik has not been identified, nor have the Āl Bakr and Qāsim mentioned in the poem (which does not mention ʿUqbah).

85 al-ʿAnbarī al-Iṣbahānī[1]

Wāʾil ibn Yashkur[2] told me: Khushnām ibn Aḥmad told us: When ʿAlī ibn ʿĀṣim al-ʿAnbarī had composed his poem in *rajaz* metre, lampooning the people of Media[3] he recited it to Abū Dulaf:

> Wāʾil has come to you with a caravan[4]
> Carrying camel loads of pricks:
> Two pricks on each camel,
> Which would be too heavy for mules or asses …

When the reciter reached this verse:

> It passed by al-Karaj but did not turn off the road …[5]

Abū Dulaf said, "Shut your mouth, until they have come past you!"

This ʿAlī ibn ʿĀṣim was a good poet. He used to live in al-Jabal, but he moved to Iraq and composed panegyrics on its leading persons. If he had stayed there all poets would have bowed to him, for his poetry contains more beauties than that of Muslim ibn al-Walīd, Abū l-Shīṣ, and others in their class. He composed a poem with rhyme letter L that is unequalled by anyone:[6]

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1 ʿAlī ibn ʿĀṣim al-ʿAnbarī al-Iṣbahānī (or al-Aṣbahānī, as vowelled in the editions) has no entries in the standard reference works ancient or modern except al-Marzubānī, *Muʿjam*, 139–140. The *nisbah* al-ʿAnbarī could refer to the tribe of al-ʿAnbar ibn ʿAmr, also called Bal-ʿAnbar, of which the poet may have been a member or *mawlā*. Or perhaps it means "seller of ambergris". In Ibn al-Muʿtazz, *Badīʿ*, 24 he is called ʿAlī ibn ʿĀṣim al-ʿAbdī al-Iṣfahānī.

2 *Mukhtaṣar*: Wāʾil ibn Bakr al-Shaybānī.

3 The editions have *ahl al-māhiyyāt*, "the people of quality"; but this expression sounds to me like a modern Arabic calque. I follow Eghbal's emendation, reading *ahl al-Māhāt*, referring to ancient Media, the region in North-Western Iran, also called al-Jibāl or al-Jabal. See e.g. Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-buldān*, entry "Māhān" (where the Arabicised form al-Māhāt occurs in quoted verses).

4 The identity of Wāʾil is unknown. Instead of *La-qad atatkum Wāʾilun bi-ʿīrī* the *Mukhtaṣar* has *Qad aqbalat awāʾilun li-ʿīrī*, "The vanguard of a caravan has arrived".

5 The preceding four *rajaz* verses all rhyme in *-ī/ūrī*, but the rhyme of this verse is *-ajī*, so the poem seems to have a stanzaic form. The metre requires reading al-Karj, as a poetic licence. As mentioned before, al-Karaj was the family seat of the Dulafids.

6 Vss. 7 and 16 are in Ibn al-Muʿtazz, *Badīʿ*, 24; vss. 18, 25, 27–30 in al-Marzubānī, *Muʿjam*, 139–140, where the poem is said to be a panegyric on ʿAbd Allāh ibn Hilāl al-Maʿrūfī, who has not been identified. ʿAbd Allāh may be an error for ʿUbayd Allāh (see vs. 24 of the poem). His teknonym, Abū Muʿādh, is given in vs. 22. Vs. 18 is in al-Rāghib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ii, 363 and vss.

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May your camels be slaughtered on the campsite remains![7]
For so long you have reproved me,[8] at the loading of the burdens!
So often you have blamed me! I have plugged my ears,
and I closed them against the tune of those who blame me.
So often you are harsh to those whose breasts
harbour sighs and anxiety!
The clouds of their eyes pour rain on their cheeks
and their traces are obliterated with those at the abodes.
Since the people have been staying at the abode for so long, {169} [355]
the campsite remains have almost begun to question them.[9]
The impending departure has dispersed his fortitude to the four winds,
when the fair women came out, ready to depart.
Consolation was bridled when their mounts were bridled
and the camel drivers drove it forth together with the camels.[10]
They were white, having stolen from the oryx cows of al-Ṣarīm[11] their eyes,
and from al-Ṣarīm itself the sandhills of their behinds;
Branches on sand dunes, carrying crescent moons
that leave our crescent moons bereft of beauty.
They took preparations for going far, bringing near
our deaths (*ājāl*) in the pasturage places of oryx herds (*ājāl*),
Every pretty girl, who, unveiling herself,[12] shows you
the beams of the sun (*ghazālah*) above the neck of a gazelle (*ghazālah*);

36–37 are in ii, 89, anonymously. The poem is replete with paronomasia (*tajnīs*), antithesis (*ṭibāq*), and other figures.

7 I have taken *nuḥirat* to be an optative rather than past tense, "(your camels) were slaughtered". Perhaps this alludes to the ancient Arab custom of slaughtering a camel at the grave of its owner, and the speaker, about to be abandoned, compares himself to the deceased.

8 The editions, following the MS, have *tatbaʿūniya*, "you follow me", which does not seem to make sense. I tentatively read it as *taʿtibūniya*; another possibility is *tuʿnifūniya*, "you are harsh to me".

9 An unusual inversion of the very common traditional motif of "questioning the abodes", by the poet at the abandoned site.

10 Ibn al-Muʿtazz quotes this verse together with vs. 16 in his *al-Badīʿ* as examples of *istiʿārah* (metaphor) to be avoided, apparently finding the metaphors far-fetched.

11 Al-Ṣarīm is a place of uncertain location (Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-buldān*). The expression "the eyes of the oryx cows of al-Ṣarīm" also occurs in a poem by Salmā al-Baghdādiyyah quoted in al-Suyūṭī, *Nuzhat al-julasāʾ*, 44.

12 Farrāj seems right in not adopting Eghbal's suggestion of reading *shuʿūruhā* ("her hair") instead of *sufūruhā*.

Her anklets are choked, her girdle wanders,
and her girdle is even smaller than her anklets![13]
Events with their fickleness have severed the bonds (*waṣl*) with them,
and it is as if they severed my limbs (*awṣāl*).
May rain bless those bygone days, now past,
whose length was shortened by being united with the loved ones!
The duration of joy seemed, when those days ended,
nothing but the eye-salve of a lover smitten by a phantom.
When misfortunes opened their mouths wide to choke on me
I made them swallow grief by the striding of camels.[14]
I took off the garment of wastelands by travelling by night
and made the clothes of darkness my garment.
And I spread out striped Yemeni mantles of poems,
their crescent moons rising over Ibn Hilāl.[15]
Poetry is not useful unless it is clothed with
my tailoring (*allī*) and my mount moves fast (*alla*) in a mirage
(*āl*).[16]
[356] Your success lies in resting (*maqīl*) in mountain passes,
not in resting away from sons of chieftains (*aqyāl*).[17]
In cutting through wastelands lies the tying up of my hope,
so connect your morning journey in them with the afternoons.[18]
Seek refuge (*fa-staʿidh*) with Abū Muʿādh! Yes, his generosity to you
is a charm (*ʿūdhah*) against disastrous dearth.
Go to the deep waters of benefice and his flood will quench your thirst!
How much longer will you hover around mere puddles!

---

13 A hyperbolical description of plump calves and slim waist.

14 He seems to say that he intends to expel his grief by departing himself, as is suggested in the following.

15 The imagery is rather complex. Poems are sometimes compared to mantles; those of Yemen are often mentioned. *Nashara* means "to spread out" as well as "to publish, propagate". The crescent moons (*ahillah*), perhaps the highlights of the poem, allude to Ibn Hilāl (*hilāl* being the singular of *ahillah*) and the verb *najama* ("to rise") suggests *najm*, "star", adding to the celestial theme.

16 Farrāj explains *all* as the verbal noun of *alla*, "to travel fast", and *āl* as "the sides of a mountain". But *alla l-thawb* means "to sew or stitch a cloth" (al-Zabīdī, *Tāj al-ʿarūs*, ʾLL), which seems to go better with *yartadī* and the preceding sartorial imagery. With al-Ṭabbāʿ I have taken *āl* in its more common meaning, in desert scenes, of "mirage".

17 Tentative translation. The editions have *banī l-aqbāl*, of uncertain sense, but I follow the MS, reading *banī l-aqyāl*, which also provides paronomasia with *maqīl*.

18 Antithesis of *qaṭʿ* ("cutting, traversing") and *waṣl* ("tying, connecting"), paronomasia of *waṣl*, *ṣil*, and *āṣāl*.

Say: "O ʿUbayd Allāh, son of his Hilāl!",
and all your misfortunes will cease forever.
He is a king to whom, when he appears, other kings
you see as being servants, glorifying and revering him.
His abode is a place where camels male and female are slaughtered,[19]
his courtyard is a refuge where saddle pads and saddles are put down.
His generosity is a boon around which
seas of beneficence and favours gush forth.
And when armed warriors contend for their lives with others,
striking with slicing Indian blades,
And you would think the battle cries of the horsemen in the tumult
are the roaring of lions roaring in their thickets,
Then his swords do to the enemies' lives
what his generosity does to his wealth.
May my soul be your ransom! What a lion for a day of awful battle you are,
to whom, with the marked knights, we call: "Attack!"[20]
While the horses pursue the aim of the hero,
towards their deaths, as if they were camel calves following their mothers.
Their hooves raise over you a large pavilion,
a tent woven from stirred-up dust,
In battle turmoil, in the clamour of which nothing is heard clearly
except "Holla!", scolding the horses, and "Whoa!"
In a night of calamities in which you are a lamp [357]
and its stars the gleaming swords and lance-tips;
Swords white and lances brown: when naked, they are clothed, {170}
by way of sheaths, with the skulls of champions.
You gave them to drink, humbled, the waters of perdition
and they returned from the waterhole with shirts dyed red.
You made the Religion show its teeth in laughter after its frowning,
in Fārisjīn in a battle with the errant ones.[21]

19 As food to regale guests.

20 *Nazāli* literally means "dismount!", referring either to the ancient custom of dismounting from camels to fight on horseback, or to dismounting from horses in the thick of battle, to fight on foot (al-Baghdādī, *Khizānah*, v, 49. al-Zabīdī, *Tāj al-ʿarūs*, NZL). Here it may refer more generally to joining battle.

21 I follow Farrāj in adopting Eghbal's suggestion of emending *fī farsakhayni* ("over two para-

You left the days of Error as nights
and the nights of Islam no longer as nights,
You left the Religion clothed in its robe of beauty
and Unbelief clothed in a robe of exemplary punishment.
Their armed warriors were to you as wild asses,
toyed with by the claws of the lion.
I have compared your day of battle with that of Ḥujr and his kinsman,
ʿAmr, on the morrow after the Night of the Mountains.[22]
It did not harm the tribe of Dārim, the day you established their glory,
that Mujāshiʿ did not act with greatness.[23]
I'd give my father and mother in ransom for your clan:
in you is refuge in times of commotion.
He who seeks safety in their villages[24] in such times
lays down his travelling stick, in the strongholds of ibexes.[25]
Lions they are, who, when charged with waging awful warfare,
lie in a lair[26] in a thicket of lances.
When armed warriors join battle you will find them
like lions bending over lion cubs.
But for the beauties of their lofty deeds
beautiful proverbial sayings would not be current in East and West.

---

sangs") to *fī Farsajīna*, a licence, for reasons of metre, for Fārisjīn, a location near Qazwīn (Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-buldān*). I have not been able to find anything about the battle mentioned here.

22 Ḥujr is identified, probably correctly, by al-Ṭabbāʿ as Ḥujr ibn al-Ḥārith, son of the king of Kindah and the father of the famous pre-Islamic poet Imruʾ al-Qays. *Yawm Ḥujr*, "the battle day of Ḥujr" then refers to the battle in which Ḥujr was killed by the tribe of Asad (see e.g. al-Maydānī, *Majmaʿ*, ii, 527). *Ṣinw*, here translated as "kinsman", is usually "brother". Ḥujr did not, however, have a brother called ʿAmr. But *ṣinw* sometimes means "son" rather than "brother", so ʿAmr ibn Ḥujr ibn al-Ḥārith could be meant. "The Night of the Mountains" (*laylat al-ajbāl*) has not been found.

23 For Dārim ibn Mālik (a branch of Tamīm) and Mujāshiʿ ibn Dārim see Ibn al-Kalbī, *Ǧamharat an-nasab*, Tables 60 and 61. The addressee of the poem apparently belonged to Dārim; the reference to Mujāshiʿ's lack of greatness, *jalāl*, is not clear to me, but be something may be found in Jarīr's many invective verses on Mujāshiʿ, the clan of his rival al-Farazdaq.

24 *Bi-qurāhumū*; Farrāj thinks it could be *bi-dharāhumū*, "in their courtyard".

25 A common image of impregnability.

26 The MS has *aḥdharna*, meaning unclear. I have adopted Farrāj's suggestion of reading *akhdarna*.

You, who are a guarantor of their valour and your liberality
to the people, in giving much or little,
When you let go the reins of wealth, [358]
the reins of hope were attached to you.
How could any prudent or resolute man turn his back
on you in times of distress, Ibn Hilāl?
Your abode is where hopes reside;
the edge of your sword is where deaths dwell.

Admired among the poetry of al-ʿAnbarī is the following:[27]

You made a connection between my need
and your kind opinion, O man of liberal spending![28]
But then, when you had made it tread over the roughest terrain
and had sent it on smoother ground,
You postponed it, as if, with broken leg,
it got stuck in the mud.

Most of the poetry of ʿAlī ibn ʿĀṣim is of high quality. He is one of the noted poets.

27 Quoted in al-Qālī, *Dhayl al-Amālī*, 118, attributed starkly to "'Abd Allāh".

28 Instead of *yā akhā l-badhlī* the version of *Dhayl al-Amālī* has *yā abā l-faḍlī*, which rather sounds like addressing a personal name, "O Abū l-Faḍl!"

86 Ibn al-ʿAllāf al-Nahrawānī[1]

Muḍarris ibn Aḥmad told me: Ibn al-Sadūsī told me: Ibn al-ʿAllāf came from the villages of al-Nahrawān. He was struck by the evil eye.[2] Khālid ibn Yazīd al-Kātib[3] claims that his father sold fodder at the Baradān Bridge.[4]

Among the verses by him that we have selected are these:[5]

He meets generosity with a modest face,[6]
and the front parts of lances with a brazen face.

---

1 Abū Bakr al-Ḥasan ibn ʿAlī ibn Aḥmad ibn Bashshār ibn Ziyād, known as Ibn al-ʿAllāf, survived Ibn al-Muʿtazz by many years; he is said to have died in 318/930 or the following year at the age of 100 (amounting to a mere 97 according to a solar calendar). His father is said to have been a seller of animal fodder (*ʿallāf*). Ibn al-ʿAllāf was a poet and traditionist, and a boon companion of Caliph al-Muʿtaḍid. Ibn Khallikān (*Wafayāt*, ii, 107) claims that he was also an intimate of Ibn al-Muʿtazz, but the present entry makes no mention of this. He has entries in al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, viii, 375–377; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, ii, 107–111; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xii, 169–173; idem, *Nakt al-himyān*, 139–142. Al-Ṣafadī's *Wāfī* has another entry on him (viii, 150–151), where he is called "Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-ʿAllāfī". See also *GAS*, ii, 589–590, *EI2*, iii, 702, "Ibn al-ʿAllāf" (Ch. Pellat). Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, i, 539 mentions a collection of his poems and reports about him comprising 400 folios. He is famous for his poem lamenting the death of his cat, killed by the owners of a dovecote for having caught some squabs. Portions of the poem are quoted by Ibn Khallikān and al-Ṣafadī, and see e.g. al-Damīrī, *Ḥayāt al-ḥayawān*, ii, 386–387, al-Thaʿālibī, *Thimār*, 193–194; the longest version, 73 vss., is in Ṣāʿid al-Rabaʿī, *Fuṣūṣ*, iv, 29–37. It is often claimed, by authors mediaeval and modern, that the cat's death stands for the untimely demise of Ibn al-Muʿtazz; others assert that it is really about a son of a vizier, or a slave of the poet who had fallen in love with a concubine of a vizier and was executed. There is, of course, the possibility that the poem is actually about the poet's cat. This is my favoured interpretation, and that of al-Ṣafadī, who says, "I am much amazed by those who claim that this elegy is on anyone other than a cat" (*Nakt al-himyān*, 142). Ibn al-ʿAllāf's poetry has been collected by Ṣabīḥ Radīf, as *Shiʿr Ibn al-ʿAllāf*.

2 *Kāna muṣāban bi-l-ʿayn*; the same is said of Ashjaʿ al-Sulamī (above, § 41). It does not mean that he was blind, but al-Ṣafadī included him in his *Nakt al-himyān*, on blind people, and Sezgin and Pellat also assert that he became blind in old age (which is not unlikely for a near-centenarian).

3 He has an entry below, § 115.

4 Qanṭarat Baradān (or al-Baradān as in Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-buldān*) is a district of Baghdad; see also Le Strange, *Baghdad*, 206, 215.

5 Al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, viii, 150 (the entry on Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-ʿAllāfī, quoting Ibn al-Muʿtazz's *Ṭabaqāt*). The verses are also attributed to Bakr ibn al-Naṭṭāḥ, see Bakr ibn al-Naṭṭāḥ, *Shiʿr*, 14; al-Ḥātimī, *Mūḍiḥah*, 90, al-ʿAskarī, *Ṣināʿatayn*, 243 (vs. 1); Ibn Ḥamdūn, *Tadhkirah*, iv, 45 (vs. 1). Vs. 1 is quoted anonymously in al-Qālī, *Dhayl al-Amālī*, 129. In al-Nābulusī, *Nafaḥāt*, 323–324 the two verses are attributed to Ibn al-Aʿrābī. For another English translation, see Cachia, *The Arch Rhetorician*, 56–57. Vs. 2 is quoted in a poem by Badīʿ al-Zamān al-Hamadhānī in al-Ḥuṣrī, *Zahr*, 417.

6 When facing calls on his generosity he is not proud or boastful (cf. *Nafaḥāt*: *bi-wajhin ṣabīḥin*, "with radiant face" instead of *bi-wajhin ḥayiyyin*).

Thus! Thus should lofty traits be!
The paths of glory are not the paths of jesting.

He also said:[7]

Four traits, given by God, adorn you,
two for this world, and two for religion:
The man of Ṭayyiʾ's liberality, Ibn Ẓālim's valour,
Abū Dharr's truthfulness, and Ibn Sīrīn's piety.[8]

Admired are also these verses by him:[9] {171} [359]

With my laughter I hide my love for you. But often
I lie awake, with tears showing what I keep secret.
I restrain my gaze, though it thirsts for drinking,
but I conceal what my ribs contain.
I am amazed by my eyes, how they persist in loving,
though my heart has no intercessor in your thoughts.
I am wasting away, I am dwindling, infected by love of you,
my eyes are sleepless while other eyes slumber.
I weep, but I do not weep for what I have already experienced:
rather, I weep for what is happening now.

Admired, too, are these verses by him:[10]

7 Ibn al-ʿAllāf, *Shiʿr*, 46. Not found in other sources. According to the *Mukhtaṣar* (see ed. Farrāj, Appendix, 454) the verses are in praise of al-Muṭṭalib ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Mālik al-Khuzāʿī.

8 "The man of Ṭayyiʾ" is Ḥātim al-Ṭāʾī, the pre-Islamic poet who is proverbial for his generosity. The exploits of al-Ḥārith ibn Ẓālim al-Murrī, pre-Islamic tribal leader and poet, gave rise to the saying *aftak min al-Ḥārith ibn Ẓālim*, "more murderous than al-Ḥārith ibn Ẓālim" (e.g. al-ʿAskarī, *Jamharah*, ii, 95, al-Maydānī, *Majmaʿ*, ii, 107). Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī (d. 32/652–653) was a Companion of the Prophet; al-Thaʿālibī, *Thimār*, 87 lists "Abū Dharr's truthfulness" (*ṣidq Abī Dharr*) as a proverbial expression. Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Sīrīn (d. 110/728), famous as a Hadith transmitter and dream interpreter, was noted for his piety; al-Thaʿālibī, *Thimār*, 90 lists *waraʿ Ibn Sīrīn* as a proverbial saying (*waraʿ* being a near-synonym of *nusk*, in the present verse).

9 Ibn al-ʿAllāf, *Shiʿr*, 41 (omitting vs. 3, apparently an oversight); al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, viii, 151.

10 The bracketed verses (4–6) are taken from the *Mukhtaṣar* (ed. Farrāj, Appendix, 454). The verses are attributed to Muḥammad ibn Wuhayb in *Aghānī*, xix, 85–86 (with three other verses) and al-Raffāʾ, *Muḥibb*, i, 214 (vss. 1–2, 5–6). See Ibn al-ʿAllāf, *Shiʿr*, 44.

Sleep! But me you have consigned to insomnia,
  while you divert yourself tempting those who are in love.[11]
You have left of my body a mere
  ghost, unlike the way it was created,
A man who cries out to you from his pains
  and whose insides are ablaze, burning.
[His eyes are drowned in tears,
  their pupils cried out, "We're drowning!"[12]
Why must someone with perfect good qualities
  be hostile to the eyes of one who is in love?[13]
It is for you to show us beauty
  and for us to use our pupils.]

Ibn al-ʿAllāf composed many poems. He is one of the proficient poets and he has memorised ancient as well as modern poetry.

11 Reading, with *Aghānī*, *lāhiyan tughrī bi-man ʿashiqā*, a version that Farrāj prefers to that of the text (*lāhiyan baʿdī bi-man ʿashiqā*).

12 *Insān* means "human being" as well as "pupil of the eye".

13 Reading *man ramaqā* ("who gazes"), with *Aghānī* and *Muḥibb*, avoids the repetition of *man ʿashiqā*.

87 Isḥāq ibn Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī[1]

Muḥammad ibn Ḥabīb al-Baṣrī told me: Ibrāhīm ibn Ḥayyān told me: Isḥāq ibn Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī was poor at first, but when he became wealthy he bought a lot of date-palm plantations in Basra and he moved there. He served five caliphs with his wit, his erudition, and his excellence in his art.[2] When ʿAlī ibn Hishām[3] was appointed vizier, ‖ he wrote a short letter to Isḥāq, asking him to join him. [360]
When Isḥāq read the letter he was not pleased, because he felt too weak for being in someone's service, and he was busy with his own possessions. He wrote this reply:

> Abū Naṣr brought me a letter from you (may God support you!), which raises my status and for which my gratitude falls short. If I did not know what is meant by it, I would say: He is mistaken about me,[4] for what have we to do with you, [Abū] ʿAbd Allāh?[5] You have abandoned us, and when finally we had forgotten this world and got to hate it, turning to the world

1 Abū Muḥammad Isḥāq ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Maymūn (originally Māhān) al-Mawṣilī (d. 235/850) composed some poetry, but he is famous as being one of the greatest musicians and composers in Arab musical history. A boon companion of several caliphs, he was also a scholar who wrote books on musicians and poets. His father Ibrāhīm was likewise a famous musician; both have very lengthy sections in *Aghānī* (Ibrāhīm: v, 153–258, Isḥāq: v, 267–464; for a translation of the former see Reynolds, *Medieval Arab Music and Musicians*, 13–106, for translations of many parts of the two chapters see Sawa, *Musical and Socio-Cultural Anecdotes*, see indexes s.v. "Isḥāq al-Mawṣilī"). On Isḥāq see also Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, i, 435–440 (on father and son); al-Marzubānī, *Nūr al-qabas*, 316–318; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, vii, 354–362; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh*, viii, 142–165; Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, vi, 5–58; al-Qiftī, *Inbāh*, iv, 250–254; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, i, 202–205; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, viii, 388–393. See also *EI2*, iv, 110–111, "Isḥāḳ b. Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī" (J.W. Fück); *EI3*, "Isḥāq b. Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī" (Owen Wright); *GAS*, i, 371, ii, 579, xvi, 314, xvii, 91; *EIr*, "Esḥāq Mawṣelī" (Everett Rowson); Bencheikh, "Les musiciens et la poésie".

2 His career spanned the reigns of Hārūn, al-Amīn, al-Maʾmūn, al-Muʿtaṣim, al-Wāthiq, and al-Mutawakkil, so "five" maybe an error for "six". That his "art" (*ṣināʿah*) was singing and composing was apparently deemed too obvious to be mentioned.

3 ʿAlī ibn Hishām ibn Farrakhusraw was a music lover, a friend of Isḥāq, and a general of al-Maʾmūn and one of his intimates until his fall from favour and violent death in 217/832; but he was not a vizier and his teknonym was Abū l-Ḥasan, not Abū ʿAbd Allāh, as it is below; see e.g. al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xxii, 288–289. For the following story see also Ibn al-Marzubān, *Muntahā* (*al-shawq wa-l-firāq*), 108; *Aghānī*, xvii, 111–112; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh*, viii, 161; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, v, 21–22; Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, vi, 47–50.

4 *Aghānī*, Ibn ʿAsākir and Yāqūt have "I would have thought that the messenger made a mistake, confusing me with someone else."

5 The parenthesis is added by Farrāj from the *Mukhtaṣar*.

to come and preferring it, hoping to be saved, now you have corrupted our hearts against it and made our souls dependent on this world again, making it beautiful to our eyes and making us love your renewed favours, of which every good life and opulent benefaction falls short, with their joys making every other joy look dreary! Why do you (may God support you) consider this permissible? As for your longing to see us, were it not that you swore an oath, we would say:[6]

You who complained frivolously about your longing for us,
with a lover's complaint but without real longing:
If you longed to see us, wanting us,
you would not have been cheerful for a moment about parting,
And you would have held me just as a friend holds his friend
and you would have been true to old time's sake and the covenant.
It cannot be! Things have happened since we parted
and you have been too preoccupied with pleasures to see Isḥāq.

I have omitted (may God perpetuate your glory and give you long life!) some reproach and other things I dislike, but I have composed some verses that I shall keep publicising at al-Mirbad[7] and [I shall face North],[8] inhaling your spirits that may be there—God knows best about us. They are these:[9]

I see that few things stay as they are
and that a friend will not remain for a friend.
Although I have for a time enjoyed the good life,
like a traveller I must now journey on.
{172} [361] Is there for me, until my eyes look
at Ibn Hishām, a way in life?
For I almost met with death of grief,
while in my soul was a need for him, a burning thirst for him.

6 The verses are in the versions of Ibn al-Marzubān (vss. 1–2, 4), *Aghānī*, Ibn ʿAsākir, and Yāqūt; vss. 1–3 are anonymously in al-Rāghib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ii, 20.

7 The famous marketplace in Basra, see above, p. 295.

8 Parenthesis added by me from *Aghānī* and Yāqūt. ʿAlī ibn Hishām was governor of al-Jibāl, Armenia, and Azerbaijan, all North of Basra.

9 The verses are in the versions of *Aghānī* and Yāqūt.

> I know that, even though you do not ask me how I am, you would like to know and to hear from me that I am well. The day I am writing this my body[10] is well but my heart is sick.

In the letter there was also a note, saying:

> I am writing a nice and interesting book with the names of people, their genealogies, their countries, their times, their classes, and some stories about them, with the stories of famous and celebrated singing-girls of the Hijaz, Kufa, and Basra, the poems that were composed about them, to whom they belonged, into whose possession they came, those who had intercourse with them, and on those jurists and eminent people who said that singing was permissible. Let me know if there is anything you want me to write, so that I can do so as much as I am able, God willing.[11]

10 I prefer to read, with *Aghānī* and Yāqūt, *badan* ("body") instead of *nafs* ("spirit, soul") as in the MS and the editions.

11 Among Isḥāq's many books listed by Ibn al-Nadīm (*Fihrist*, i, 437–438) are a book on *qiyān* (singing-girls), one on the singing-girls of the Hijaz, and numerous books on individual male singers and poets, as well as "The Great Book of Songs" (*Kitāb al-aghānī l-kabīr*), which served as a model for Abū l-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī's *Aghānī*.

88 Ibn Abī Ḥakīm[1]

He is a *mawlā* of the Banū Makhzūm. Al-Ashjaʿī told me: al-Ṣalt ibn Ibrāhīm al-Kūfī informed me: Ibn Abī Ḥakīm the poet shaved off his beard, all of it. It was said that he was accused of being a pathic.[2] He lampooned Abū Tammām, and a hemistich by Abū Tammām on him was recited to me:[3]

… An onager, out of terror, sometimes attacks a lion.

[362] Among the verses by him that we have memorised and selected are these, on al-Fatḥ ibn Khāqān:[4]

Teeth: hailstones imitate their colour;
saliva: honey imitates its taste;
Cheeks: apples on a tree,
polished by dew, no hand has reached for them;
Breasts: pomegranates in gardens, their roots
watered by the roaring torrent of an ever-flowing stream;
Waist: but for the might of its Creator
it would snap from the weight of the buttocks.
If you said that the full moon resembles him,
they would say, "Said truly!" No reproof, no rebuttal!

1 Much is uncertain about this poet. In the MS he is called Ibn Abī Ḥakīmah (or Ḥukaymah), which has been emended in the editions to Ibn Abī Ḥakīm, as in the *Mukhtaṣar*. Ibn al-Jarrāḥ, *Waraqah*, 120–121 mentions him in the entry on Muḥammad ibn Maʿrūf and says that they, together with others including Ibn al-Rūmī, Mithqāl, and Abū Yūsuf ibn al-Daqqāq, were a group of poets living in Baghdad during the period in which Samarra was the residence of the caliphs (221–279/836–892). Ibn al-Jarrāḥ also quotes (p. 122) two verses on him by Yūsuf ibn al-Daqqāq or Ibn Maʿrūf; the rhyme confirms the name as Ibn Abī Ḥakīm (not Ḥukaym). Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, i, 537 lists Muḥammad ibn [ʿAlī ibn] Abī Ḥakmah (vowelled thus in the edition) as a poet who composed little (*muqill*); Flügel's edition p. 167 has Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī ibn Abī Ḥakīmah (or Ḥukaymah). He has no entries in the usual reference works.

2 See the obscene verses on him by ʿUbayd Allāh ibn Isḥāq al-Mukārī in Ibn al-Jarrāḥ, *Waraqah*, 121.

3 See Abū Tammām, *Dīwān*, iv, 351, five verses ending with this hemistich. Vss. 1–2 are quoted in *Aghānī*, xiii, 252 and said to be by Abū Tammām on ʿAbd al-Ṣamad ibn al-Muʿadhdhal. The hemistich is quoted anonymously in Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, iii, 130, as a proverb about someone forced to fight against his will; also al-Maydānī, *Majmaʿ*, ii, 155.

4 Al-Fatḥ ibn Khāqān, of Turkish descent, was a military commander under al-Muʿtaṣim but also erudite and a poet. He was very close to al-Muʿtaṣim's son, the Caliph al-Mutawakkil, and murdered together with him in 247/861. The verses have not been found elsewhere. They

Fine are these verses:[5]

Long yearning and the weakness of a long-suffering one
dissolve the heart with thoughts:
Love is a troubling sickness for him
and the heart is in danger of death.
Yearning is sent forth from where it knelt down
by a face whose beauty outshines the moon.
It is as if God, when He formed him,
brought together in him all beautiful forms,
For beauty in him, since he has no partner,[6]
is made different from all human beings one sees.
A twig of the willow, a sand dune at riverbeds,[7]
smooth of body, strong of waist (?),[8]
With a beautiful figure, not made too short, [363]
nor given disproportionate tallness.
He came past and his beauties, his burning cheeks,
were wounded by people's looks.[9]

He also said:[10]

Though you invite me so that I might invite you tomorrow,
while your purse is brimful and my purse is at low ebb,
Avoiding you were better than joining you; I am someone
who avoids a man who desires reciprocity.[11]

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seem to describe a woman rather than a man or boy (but a masculine pronoun is used in vs. 5); perhaps they formed the introduction of a panegyric on al-Fatḥ.

5 Vss. 1–4 are attributed to Abū Nuwās, on his girlfriend Janān (*Dīwān*, iv, 59–60); vss. 5–8 have not been found elsewhere.

6 *Lā sharīka lahū*, said of God in Q al-Anʿām 6:163.

7 *Kathību andiyatin* is unclear; I follow Farrāj's suggestion, reading *kathību awdiyatin*. But it may be that *andiyatin*, as plural of *nadā*, "moistness, dew", is correct, as Abeer al-Abbasi thinks (personal communication).

8 *Wa-jidhli muḥtaḍirī* is unclear and Farrāj's suggestions do not convince me (*jidhl*, "tree stump", *muḥtaḍir*, "living in a settled region", or *mukhtaḍar*, "place of green herbage"). I read, tentatively, *wa-jadli mukhtaṣarī*, because it goes better with the preceding *fī līni ʿitfin*.

9 The image is found in other poems: the blushing cheeks of the beloved suggest blood, fancifully shed by the wounding gaze of lovers and the tenderness of the beloved's skin.

10 Quoted in al-Thaʿālibī, *Lubāb al-ādāb*, 182–183, attributed to "Ibn Ḥakīm".

11 The editions by Farrāj and al-Ṭabbāʿ follow the MS in the irregular spelling of *al-mukāfāti* with a *tā'* instead of a *tā' marbūṭah*.

{173} **89 al-ʿAtāhiyah, the Son of Abū l-ʿAtāhiyah**[1]

ʿAlī ibn Ismāʿīl told me, on the authority of al-Faḍl ibn al-Mubārak: al-ʿAtāhiyah ibn Abī l-ʿAtāhiyah was a naturally gifted, eloquent poet. His father was irreligious, a believer in Dualism[2] even though he was outwardly pious; but al-ʿAtāhiyah was of sound religion and devout. He was appointed as judge for some time. He led a virtuous life and was of good character, combining poetry with legal knowledge. Good verses by him are the following:[3]

Were you shocked by grey hairs that loomed in the blackness,
spreading and revealing[4] causes of decay?
But you turned grey only by the course of dire events,
which—upon your life!—come in the morning and the evening.
Events come to pass, articulate in their speech,
while sometimes they swerve aside, deviating.
Many a body that relishes a soft life of comfort
will one day be lost and the spirit will depart.
[364] You have changed since the time of youth and its sweetness,
redolent with the freshness of good life.[5]
If you wish, let hair dye pasture on your grey hair,[6]
for your hair laments decay and mourns.

He also said:[7]

1 The son of Abū l-ʿAtāhiyah (above, §36) was called Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad, al-ʿAtāhiyah being a nickname (*laqab*, see on his name above, p. 326). He has entries in al-Marzubānī, *Muʿjam*, 377–378; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, ii, 357–359; al-Nashshābī, *Mudhākarah*, 118–119; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, ii, 209. He died in 244/858.

2 See above, p. 326.

3 Not found elsewhere.

4 Adopting Farrāj's emendation of *wa-yanūḥū* to *wa-yabūḥū*, avoiding the repetition of the rhyme word with vs. 6.

5 The edition follows the MS: *wa-kāna wa-ṭību l-ʿayshi minhu yafūḥū*, the syntax of which is problematic. I have adopted Farrāj's suggestion, reading *raṭību l-ʿayshi*.

6 The text has *fa-stadʿi l-mashība khiḍābahū*, which is unclear, and again I follow Farrāj's suggestion of reading *fa-starʿi*. Although dyeing one's hair black is disapproved of for old men (dyeing with henna is preferable), the poet implies that black is the colour of mourning.

7 *Aghānī*, iv, 88; al-Marzubānī, *Muʿjam*, 377; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, ii, 358; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, ii, 209 (who calls it "inferior poetry", *shiʿr munḥaṭṭ*). Vss. 1–2 are attributed to Abū l-ʿAtāhiyah in al-Washshāʾ, *Muwashshā*, 7; vs. 2 is attributed to him in al-ʿAskarī, *Ṣināʿatayn*, 20. The three verses are quoted anonymously in Ibn Qutaybah, *ʿUyūn*, ii, 179–180 and the opening hemistich is quoted anonymously in al-Maydānī, *Majmaʿ*, ii, 155, as a proverb of the "moderns" (*al-muwalladūn*). This and other versions have *aflaḥa* ("prospers") instead of *salima* ("is safe").

He who is silent and taciturn is safe;
the speech of one who is aware of his speech[8] is sustenance.
Not every utterance that has an answer
is the answer to which silence would be guarded against.[9]
How strange: a man who laughs much
yet knowing for certain that he will die!

Fine are also these verses by him:[10]

I have been patient, ʿAlī, but I am sad
because of worries that frighten me about the one I love.
I have submitted to him, even prostrating myself to his slave,[11]
but submission did not bring me any nearer to him.
I have delayed annoying; he is quick
to do any disgraceful deed.
[So if you reward me with union, union will be my pleasure;
but if not, I will be hearing and obeying.]
Abū Ḥasan, I complain to you about my passion;
I weep, for I am fond of weeping!

8 Thus (*wāʿī l-kalāmi*) in the MS and *ʿUyūn*; many other sources have *rāʿī l-kalāmi*, "one who heeds his speech".

9 The sense of this is unclear to me. Instead of *jawābu mā yuḥdharu l-sukūtū* other sources have *jawābu mā yukrahu l-sukūtū*.

10 Not found elsewhere. Vs. 4, bracketed, is taken from the *Mukhtaṣar* (ed. Farrāj, Appendix 455).

11 Following Farrāj in reading *li-ʿabdihī* (as in the *Mukhtaṣar*) instead of *li-ʿabdihā*, "to her slave".

90 ʿAbd Allāh, the Son of Abū l-Shīṣ[1]

Al-Nawfalī told me: "We were in Wāsiṭ in the company of Ibn Abī l-Shīṣ. We were discussing poets, preferring some to some others. Ibn Abī l-Shīṣ said, 'I am the best poet, but my father was better than me or all those who passed away or remained.' I replied, 'You are lying, that is, about yourself! Your father, yes, upon my life, [he was the best poet among his contemporaries].'[2] Now Ibn
[365] ‖ Abī l-Shīṣ was slightly deranged, because black bile prevailed in his temperament. He lost his temper and was furious. He tore his clothes and threw himself[3] into the Tigris. There were some among us who could swim and we got him out. He was senseless with cold, for it was a very cold day. We wrapped him up and in the end he regained his strength a little. But the following morning he died."[4]

Fine verses by him are the following:[5]

I think Fate has sworn an oath, and kept it,
not to let a noble man acquire wealth.
It is as if the broad blades of noble men have killed
its father and it now fights all noble men;
And it has given some people the possession of wealth
making them its owner, for good or for bad,
{174} While every eminent man now rides
on the necks of darkness on sea and on land,
Rending open the collar of night's shirt
when the collar of night's shirt is buttoned up.[6]

1 ʿAbd Allāh, the son of Abū l-Shīṣ (see above, § 9), was also a poet, whose poetry was "sound" (*ṣāliḥ*) according to Abū l-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī (*Aghānī*, xvi, 400). Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 848, in the entry on his father, also says that ʿAbd Allāh was a poet, but he has no separate entries in the usual reference work except al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, xi, 257 and al-Nashshābī, *Mudhākarah*, 103–105. He lived in Samarra (for invective verses on the town see *Mudhākarah*, 104) and was close to Abū Tammām (for a few verses on Abū Tammām's death see *Mudhākarah*, 103).

2 The parenthesis is added from the *Mukhtaṣar*.

3 I read *zakhkha nafsahū* rather than *zajja nafsahū* as in the MS and the editions.

4 The *Mukhtaṣar* has: "He lasted only five days after this and then he died."

5 Ibn Qutaybah, *ʿUyūn*, i, 232–233 (vss. 1, 3–6, 8 with an additional vs.); al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, xi, 257 (vss. 1–8 with an additional vs.); Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, *Bahjah*, i, 230 (vss. 1–2, 4–8 with additional vs.); al-Nashshābī, *Mudhākarah*, 103 (vss. 1–2, 4–8). Vs. 1 is quoted in al-Zamakhsharī, *Rabīʿ*, i, 544. Vs. 1 and the additional verse are attributed to Abū Tammām in al-Rāghib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, i, 316 and quoted anonymously in al-Jarīrī, *Jalīs*, i, 205 and (with vs. 8) in al-Tawḥīdī, *Baṣāʾir*, v, 59–60.

6 Reading, with the MS and the other sources, *zurrā*, not *dhurrā* as in the editions.

He observes riches with a laughing face
and death with a gloomy face,
That he might acquire wealth from the ends of the earth,
with which he will reside in a lofty place.
If a man makes the darkness his riding camel,
the darkness will give him good and bad.

He also said:[7]

It is sad enough that I see the one I love
struck down, and I unable to help him,
Except praying to God for him, sincerely,
scattering tears on my cheeks over his violent death.

7 Not found elsewhere.

[366] 91 Maḥmūd al-Warrāq[1]

Al-Qāsim ibn Dāwūd told me: al-Ḥasan al-ʿAlawī informed me:[2]

Sakan,[3] the slave girl of Maḥmūd al-Warrāq, had one of the most beautiful faces of all God's creatures, and she was among the most erudite of people and the best singers. She also composed poetry, producing fine thoughts and beautiful expressions. At a certain time it happened that Maḥmūd's circumstances deteriorated and he became utterly destitute. So he said to his slave girl Sakan, "You see, Sakan, the bad state I am in, and how diffcult the times are. But, I swear by the majesty of God, I do not mind so much about myself as the state that I see you in, for I should like to see you in the most blessed circumstances and the most comfortable life. Now if you prefer, I shall offer you for sale; perhaps God Almighty will bring you from this penury into luxury and from this poverty to wealth."

The girl answered, "You may do as you like."

So he offered her up for sale. People competed, eager to acquire her. One of them, someone who was prepared to spend a lot on her, one hundred thousand dirhams, was a member of the Ṭāhirids. He brought the money, and when Maḥmūd saw the purses, he felt weak and he yielded, inclining towards going ahead

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1 Maḥmūd ibn al-Ḥasan al-Warrāq (d. c. 230/845), a poet who lived in Baghdad, who composed mainly short poems on gnomic and paraenetic themes (*ḥikmah*, *mawʿiẓah*), which are often quoted in anthologies. See, however, the anecdote on his drinking wine below in § 98 and the much worse version in *Aghānī*, xiv, 197–198. *Warrāq* means "bookseller", "paper seller", or "copyist", but he is also called al-Nakhkhās, "seller of slaves". He has entries in al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, xv, 102–103, Ibn Shākir, *Fawāt*, iv, 79–81; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xxv, 191–196; and see *GAS*, ii, 574–575; *EAL*, 805, "al-Warrāq" (T. Seidensticker); *EI2*, xi, 150, "al-Warrāḳ" (G.J.H. van Gelder). His verse has been collected several times; I refer to the *Dīwān* edited by ʿAdnān Rāghib al-ʿUbaydī.

2 The following story is an early example of many similar stories in Arabic sources: a man owns a slave girl or concubine; they love each other but, having become destitute, he is forced to sell her; thanks to the generosity of the new owner they are united in the end. Many analogues, some of them lengthy, naming various persons, are listed and briefly discussed in my article "Slave-Girl Lost and Regained", and see also Bray, "Verbs and Voices", 174–175.

3 Sakan has a section herself, below, § 128. Al-Iṣbahānī, *Imā'*, 79–80 has a short section on "Sakan, the slave girl of Ṭāhir ibn al-Ḥusayn", describing her as white, beautiful, a good singer, and a poet; but Maḥmūd al-Warrāq is not mentioned. In Ibn Faḍl Allāh, *Masālik* (ed. Khashabah), x, 358 she is called "Sakūn, the slave girl of Ṭāhir ibn al-Ḥusayn"; see also the translation by Gökpınar, *Höfische Musikkultur*, 52–54, where she appears as Sukūn (and where *bādiyat al-sanā'*, "of evident radiance", is mistranslated as "der Beduinen vom Sinai"). Al-Suyūṭī, *Mustaẓraf*, another book on *jawārī*, has a section (pp. 29–30) on "Sakan, the slave girl of Maḥmūd al-Warrāq", quoting Ibn al-Muʿtazz, as does al-Ṣafadī in his *Wāfī*, xv, 290–291. A panegyric poem by her on Abū ʿAdnān Dulaf ibn Abī Dulaf is quoted in al-Nashshābī, *Mudhākarah*, 250.

with the sale. He said, "Sakan, put on your clothes and come out!" She put on her clothes and came out to the people, looking like a rising full moon. Maḥmūd was with her while she was standing in this manner. Sakan said, shedding tears, "Maḥmūd, so this is the last thing of our being together: that you prefer one hundred thousand dirhams to me?"

Maḥmūd replied, "Would you rather stay in poverty and humiliation, then?" She said, "O yes, I will bear it, though you will be troubled by it!"[4] Then Maḥmūd said, ‖ "I testify to you all that she is free, for God's sake, and that I give her [367] my house, which is all I possess, as a charitable gift; it cost me fifty thousand dirhams. Take your money, God bless you with it!" Then the Ṭāhirid said, "Since you have done this, you two may keep the money. I swear to God, I shall not take it back." So Maḥmūd took the money and lived together with Sakan in the most fortunate circumstances.

Maḥmūd composed a lot of poetry, most of it consisting of sententious and gnomic verse, with admonitions and the teaching of good behaviour. In this genre he does not fall short of Ṣāliḥ ibn ʿAbd al-Quddūs and Sābiq al-Barbarī.[5] Some of his verses are the following:[6]

A prudent man imagines for himself
any misfortunes well before they strike:
Then, if they strike all of a sudden, they will not shock him,
because he has imagined them himself.
He sees that worrying will come to an end,
so he makes its end its first.
But an ignorant man thinks he will be safe, all his days,
forgetting the evil fate of those who went before.
So, if the vicissitudes of Time take him by surprise {175}
through one of his misfortunes, he wails in despair.
But if, before, he had been prudent himself,
this would have taught him how to endure affliction.

Maḥmūd al-Warrāq died in the 'thirties of the third century.[7]

4 Instead of *aṣbiru ana wa-taḍjaru anta* Farrāj suggests reading *aṣbiru ana fa-lā-taḍjar anta*, ("… so do not worry about it"), which is possible; but the emphatic use of pronouns suggests a contrast: I will bear it but you won't.

5 On Ṣāliḥ ibn ʿAbd al-Quddūs see above, §11. Sābiq ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-Barbarī (garbled as "al-Yazīdī" in the MS), a poet from al-Raqqah, was a contemporary of the Umayyad caliph ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz. See Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh*, xx, 3–17; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xv, 69–71.

6 Maḥmūd al-Warrāq, *Dīwān*, 108; Ibn Qutaybah, *ʿUyūn*, iii, 53–54; Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, *Bahjah*, ii, 354; vss. 1–4 anonymously in Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, ii, 253.

7 As Eghbal and Farrāj say, this sentence has probably been added by a copyist.

92 ʿAbd al-Ṣamad and Aḥmad, Sons of al-Muʿadhdhal[1]

Aḥmad ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-Bakrī told me, on the authority of Ibn Sinān al-Baṣrī, who said: "Aḥmad ibn al-Muʿadhdhal was one of my friends. I often visited him.
[368] When he arrived ‖ from Samarra, having been with the Caliph, I went to him and saw that all the notables of Basra were at his place, for the Caliph had honoured him, giving him a robe of honour and a lot of money. But I did not see his brother ʿAbd al-Ṣamad among those I saw at his place. So I asked him, 'Why do I not see Abū l-Qāsim here with you?' He answered, 'Last night, when I arrived, Abū l-Qāsim—may God strengthen him!—gave me a present such as befits a devoted brother to give to his brother. I'll show it to you if you like.' I said, 'Yes, I'd like that, may God make you prosper! For someone like him will be devoted to his brother, be generous to him and honour him.' Aḥmad then removed the fold of his pillow and took from it a piece of paper, and on it was the following:[2]

He left with testicles like little balls
and returned with testicles like half an olive oil bottle.[3]
When some little dirhams came to him
from the sovereign, he sold for them his lord.

1 Abū l-Qāsim ʿAbd al-Ṣamad ibn al-Muʿadhdhal ibn Ghaylān (d. 240/854–855) and his brother Abū l-Faḍl Aḥmad belonged to an Arab family from Basra that included several poets, see Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, i, 526–527 on Āl al-Muʿadhdhal, where ʿAbd al-Ṣamad's collected poetry is given as 150 folios. ʿAbd al-Ṣamad was known especially for his invective poems on all and sundry (including his brother). Al-Marzubānī wrote a book of c. 200 folios (now lost) about him (*Akhbār ʿAbd al-Ṣamad ibn al-Muʿadhdhal*, see Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, i, 414). He has entries in *Aghānī*, xiii, 225–258; Ibn Shākir, *Fawāt*, ii, 330–331; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xviii, 454–456; Ibn Faḍl Allāh, *Masālik* (ed. al-Jubūrī), xiv, 439–442; and see *EI2*, iii, 878–879, "Ibn al-Muʿadhdhal" (Ch. Pellat); *GAS*, ii, 508. His collected poems have been edited by Zuhayr Ghāzī Zāhid. His brother Aḥmad was less productive as a poet and better known as a pious jurist (*faqīh*) who composed wisdom poetry; see al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, viii, 184–185, where he is called "the opposite of his brother". On the relationship between the two, see *Aghānī*, xiii, 226, 249–250, 252, 257, also al-Ḥuṣrī, *Zahr*, 706–708.

2 ʿAbd al-Ṣamad ibn al-Muʿadhdhal, *Shiʿr*, 64; al-Ḥuṣrī, *Zahr*, 707 (vs. 2, preceded by two other vss.).

3 I have added "little" to bring out the intended contrast; *ukrah* merely means "ball". A *dubbah*, apart from meaning "she-bear", is a "gourd" or "glass bottle" or "vessel for oil", which is how Zāhid explains it in his note (*inā' li-l-zayt*). For other examples of testicles compared with a vessel, see the anonymous *rajaz* verses in Sībawayh, *Kitāb*, ii, 177, 202 and the *rajaz* verses in Abū Tammām's *Ḥamāsah* (al-Marzūqī, *Sharḥ*, 1847–1848).

You, Abū l-Fuḍūl,[4] have acquired for us only blame,
shame, enveloping you, and disgrace!
We have never seen Mālik bestowing on him
what Shuʿbah bestowed on al-Narsī.[5]

[This Aḥmad ibn al-Muʿadhdhal[6] was a most moderate man in his conduct and comportment, refraining from harming others, most pious in observing his religion and guarding his honour; whereas ʿAbd al-Ṣamad ibn al-Muʿadhdhal was unspeakably[7] conceited, presumptuous, and self-important. He had a foul tongue and lampooned people, even his relatives, friends, and neighbours, with hurtful poems. He was a most proficient and eloquent poet. People, fearing his tongue, would avoid him and dislike him, whereas they loved his brother Aḥmad. This would make him all the more angry with him and make him attack his brother Aḥmad's friends.]

'This,' continued Aḥmad, 'was his "devotion" and how he "honoured" me.' I said, 'I swear to God, this is an awful present!' We strongly condemned what he had done. Aḥmad said, 'If this were the only thing we would be all right!' I asked, 'What else could there be?' 'Ah!' he said, 'I know Abū l-Qāsim, may God strengthen him!' "

Fine verses by him are these:[8]

I called him in the darkness of a gloomy night,
under the portico, buried in sweet-smelling herbs,[9]

4 He changes his brother's *kunyah*, Abū l-Faḍl (literally, "Father of Excellence/al-Faḍl") to Abū l-Fuḍūl, "Father of superfluities".

5 An opaque verse. Mālik, Shuʿbah, and al-Narsī (al-B.rsī in the MS) have not been identified; Farrāj suggests ʿAbd al-Aʿlā ibn Ḥammād al-Narsī or ʿAbbās ibn al-Walīd al-Narsī al-Baṣrī, both of whom died in 237/851–852.

6 The bracketed passage is taken from the *Mukhtaṣar* (ed. Farrāj, Appendix, 456).

7 On the strange idiom *lā yunādā walīduhū* see e.g. Ibn al-Sikkīt, *Iṣlāḥ al-manṭiq*; al-Maydānī, *Majmaʿ*, ii, 461–462; al-Murtaḍā, *Amālī*, i, 222.

8 ʿAbd al-Ṣamad ibn al-Muʿadhdhal, *Shiʿr*, 178–179; vss. 1–3 in al-Raffāʾ, *Muḥibb*, iv, 301–302; vss. 1–2 in Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, *vi*, 345, said to be composed by al-Maʾmūn and sung to him by a singing-girl, with a reply by Yaḥyā ibn Aktham including vs. 3 and see al-Rāġhib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, i, 413. Vss. 1–3 are quoted in al-Zubaydī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 81, said to be composed for al-Maʾmūn by Muḥammad ibn Abī Muḥammad al-Yazīdī; attributed to ʿAbd Allāh ibn Ṭāhir ibn al-Ḥusayn in Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh*, xxix, 238.

9 The version in *ʿIqd* is rather different: "I called him when he was alive but motionless | shrouded in clothes of sweet-smelling herbs."

And I said, "Stand up!" He replied, "My feet will not obey me!"
So I said, "Take my hand!" He said, "My hand will not comply!"
I paid no attention to the wine-pourer and he made me,
as you see, bereft of reason and religion![10]

[369] He also said:[11]

When I saw that the full moon had risen
above the horizon in the sky,
And I saw that the rays of the sun had sunk
on the horizon in the west,
I made a simile with one and the other,
but the one resembling the two is more sublime:
The beloved's face when he appears,
and the beloved's neck when he turns away.

This motif is unprecedented: comparing the face, when it advances, to a full moon and comparing the neck, when it turns away, to the sun on an evening of opposition;[12] but he took this from well-known verses by Abū Nuwās and Muslim ibn al-Walīd, who were standing in al-Shammāsiyyah[13] when a young man appeared who was like a willow branch, with a face radiant like a full moon. "I say, Abū Nuwās," said Muslim, "See that one?" "I see him all right" said Abū Nuwās, "God be blessed, the Lord of all Beings and the Creator of this one!" Then the young man turned away and his neck, seen from behind,[14] was such as
{176} people had never seen ‖ in this world. Both men were perplexed. Then Muslim said,

10 Possibly this verse belongs to the preceding quotation (a suggestion of Nefeli Papoutsakis, personal communication).

11 ʿAbd al-Ṣamad ibn Muʿadhdhal, *Shiʿr*, 142; al-ʿAskarī, *Ṣināʿatayn*, 237; attributed to Mānī l-Majnūn (see below, §100) in Ibn Ḥabīb, *ʿUqalāʾ al-majānīn*, 263; attributed to Ibn al-Muʿtazz in Ibn Abī ʿAwn, *Tashbīhāt*, 343–344.

12 Farrāj questions the correctness of *laylata l-muqābalah* and suggests emending it to *li-tatimma l-muqābalah* or *li-tathbuta l-muqābalah*, but no emendation is necessary. *Laylah* means "evening" as well as "night" and it is sometimes possible for the sun and the full moon to be seen simultaneously in the evening sky, when both are partially above the horizon and directly opposite each other.

13 Al-Shammāsiyyah is a quarter in Northern Baghdad.

14 The editions have *qafāhu mustadīrun*, "his neck was round", but I have followed the MS, which has *qafāhu mustadbiran*.

The face is a full moon and the neck a sun …[15]

And Abū Nuwās said,

… and a face …(?)[16]

15 The MS has *al-wajhu mudawwarun*, "the face is round", emended by Farrāj to *al-wajhu badrun*. No such hemistich is found in the *Dīwān* of Muslim ibn al-Walīd; the nearest is a verse: "Hārūn is a full moon of the Banū Hāshim | and Hārūn's sister is to them a sun" (*Dīwān*, 279).

16 The MS reads as *wa-wajhun dhābiḥū* ("and a slaughtering face"), clearly incorrect; it cannot be traced in Abū Nuwās's *Dīwān*. Farrāj suggests *wa-Saʿdu* (*l-*)*Dhābiḥū* (or *-Dhābiḥī*), the name of two stars in Capricornus, which does not seem helpful. Other sources (Ibn al-Mudabbir, *ʿAdhrāʾ*, 37; Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, v, 395; al-ʿAskarī, *Ṣināʿatayn*, 237) do not mention this anecdote but say that ʿAbd al-Ṣamad seems to have been influenced by a verse by Ibn Abī Karīmah: "His face is a neck, and the face of someone | whose neck is a face is a full moon", or a verse attributed to Abū Nuwās: "What a charming, splendid one you are! | The beauty of your neck surpasses the beauty of faces." (Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān*, v, 40), and that Ḥassān ibn Thābit preceded them all ("Your neck is more beautiful than his face", *Dīwān*, 383); see also a verse by Abū Tammām (*Dīwān*, iv, 249): "Abū Jaʿfar, you have been created splendidly! | The beauty of your neck surpasses the beauty of faces."

[370] **93 al-Ḥamdūnī, the One Who Described the *ṭaylasān*[1]**

Isḥāq ibn Ibrāhīm al-Naṣībī told me: Al-Ḥamdūnī said, "One day, when I was walking on a very crowded market in Baghdad, I was accosted by a lecher who clung to me in the crowd and who touched my tool,[2] hurting me, and then there was a pederast behind me who had thought I was a beardless boy, aiming at my arse and trying to plug my hole with his tool. Seeing myself oppressed from behind and in front, I took the lecher's hand and put it on the tool of the pederast, and I escaped from between the two of them."

Al-Ḥamdūnī was a poet of some most charming poems, and most able in descriptions. Most of his poetry was on the *ṭaylasān* of Ibn Ḥarb. On this he said:[3]

Ibn Ḥarb, you have clothed me with a *ṭaylasān*
with whose company Time got bored, rejecting it.
We thought that spiders' webs, when compared
with your *ṭaylasān*'s frailty, are as strong as a dam.
If I breathe on it, it falls apart,
if I say "Ahem!" to it, it splits.

1 Abū ʿAlī Ismāʿīl ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Ḥamdūyah, called al-Ḥamdūnī (or, more correctly, al-Ḥamdawī), a poet from Basra, famous for his many poems on a *ṭaylasān* (a hood, wrap, or mantle worn over the turban), given by a certain Ibn Ḥarb, and for another series of poems on a ewe. The expressions *ṭaylasān Ibn Ḥarb* and *shāt Saʿīd* became proverbial, especially the former, and numerous poems were composed on this *ṭaylasān*, which are often quoted in anthologies; see e.g. Ibn Abī ʿAwn, *Tashbīhāt*, 240–242; al-Thaʿālibī, *Thimār*, 601–604; al-Ḥuṣrī, *Zahr*, 1117–1119, idem, *Jamʿ al-jawāhir*, 152–157; Ibn Ḥamdūn, *Tadhkirah*, v, 436–437; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, vii, 95–98; Ibn Shākir, *Fawāt*, i, 173–177; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, ix, 75–82; al-Suyūṭī, *Aḥādīth*, 82–85. For detailed studies on the poet and the poems with some translations, see van Ess, *Der Ṭailasān des Ibn Ḥarb*; Seidensticker, "Die Gattungszugehörigkeit der 'Mantelgedichte' des Ḥamdawī"; Arazi, "Thèmes et style d'al-Ḥamdawī". Other poets took up the theme, see Wagner, "*ʿAlā maḏhab al-Ḥamdawī*: Ibn al-Rūmīs *ṭailasān*-Gedichte". On al-Ḥamdūnī/al-Ḥamdawī, who died c. 265/878, see also GAS, ii, 296, *EI2, Suppl.*, 352, "al-Ḥamdawī" (A. Arazi). In the heading of the present section, the MS calls the poet *bāʿith al-ṭaylasān*, "the one who sent the *ṭaylasān*", which contradicts the reports, and I have adopted Farrāj's plausible suggestion of reading *nāʿit* instead of *bāʿith*.

2 *Matāʿ* ("goods, property"), a common euphemism.

3 See al-ʿAskarī, *Dīwān al-maʿānī*, ii, 251; al-Ḥuṣrī, *Jamʿ*, 156; al-Thaʿālibī, *Thimār*, 603; idem, *Khāṣṣ al-khāṣṣ* (ed. Jannān), 169; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, vii, 96; Ibn Shākir, *Fawāt*, i, 173; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, ix, 76; al-Suyūṭī, *Aḥādīth*, 82. For a rhymed German translation see van Ess, *Der Ṭailasan des Ibn Ḥarb*, 19, also quoted in Seidensticker, "Die Gattungszugehörigkeit", 960.

It has so often been to the darner that
if we sent it to him it could find its way by itself.[4]

He also said:[5]

Ibn Ḥarb, you have made me poor for a long time, with
having a *ṭaylasān* darned that I could do without.
It is being darned just as Pharaoh's family is exposed
to the fire, morning and evening.[6]

And:[7]

There is a lesson to be learned from what Ibn Ḥarb clothed me
with:
Look at it! It is *one of the enormities*![8]
It was white, but we kept having it darned [371]
until it turned black from the rust of the needles.

He composed nearly two hundred verses [in fifty] epigrams, with various motifs.[9] On Ibn Abī Kharzah he said the following:[10]

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4 The poet said of this verse that he was "its son", meaning that this verse made him famous (*Aghānī*, xx, 126).

5 Ibn Abī ʿAwn, *Tashbīhāt*, 241; al-Ḥuṣrī, *Jamʿ*, 152 (4 vss.); al-Thaʿālibī, *Thimār*, 602; Ibn Ḥamdūn, *Tadhkirah*, v, 436–437; al-Zamakhsharī, *Rabīʿ*, iv, 23; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, vii, 96; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, ix, 81 (4 vss.); al-Suyūṭī, *Aḥādīth*, 83. For a rhymed German translation see van Ess, *Der Ṭailasān*, 31, also in Seidensticker, "Die Gattungszugehörigkeit", 961.

6 An allusion to Q Ghāfir 40:46.

7 Al-Thaʿālibī, *Thimār*, 602; Ibn Ḥamdūn, *Tadhkirah*, v, 437; al-Zamakhsharī, *Rabīʿ*, iv, 23; vs. 2 with another verse, anonymously, in Usāmah, *Badīʿ*, 93. For a rhymed German translation see van Ess, *Der Ṭailasān*, 35.

8 Q al-Muddaththir 74:35, on hellfire.

9 The parenthesis has been added by Farrāj from al-Ḥuṣrī, *Jamʿ*, 153. The editions omit a following sentence that is clearly added by a later copyist: "Al-Zamakhsharī mentions it in *Rabīʿ al-abrār*." In *Rabīʿ*, iv, 24 one finds "they are nearly two hundred epigrams, with various motifs". As for the number of al-Ḥamdūnī's epigrams on the *ṭaylasān*, al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, ix, 81 mentions two hundred epigrams on the *ṭaylasān*, each with an original motif. Ibn Shākir, *Fawāt*, i, 173 speaks of fifty epigrams; al-Thaʿālibī mentions "nearly 200" in his *Thimār* (602) but merely "forty" in his *Khāṣṣ al-khāṣṣ*, 169.

10 Ibn Abī Kharzah has not been identified. The editions have "Ibn Abī Khazrah", but I have followed the MS (Farrāj's index, p. 533 also has Ibn Abī Kharzah). The verses have not been found elsewhere.

Haven't you noticed about Ibn Abī Kharzah
that he is in love with ʿUjāb, as he claims?[11]
It is not enough for him, in his love of her,
merely to "massage" himself or have a wet dream.
When he spends the night drunk with love of her
and wakes up in the morning, dyspeptic with hunger,[12]
Ah, what a loser-lover he is,
a man of passion, rich in lack!
I have been informed that he visited her one evening
that made his donkey piss blood from the cold;
He was wearing a single shirt of his, one that could
tell you the tales of all nations.
She sang and he donated the shirt to her,
while he was left naked like someone taking a bath;
And he sang, having been hit by the north wind,
buffeted by its cold:
"You've taken my little garment and have left me naked,
and given a long sickness to my body."[13]

11 I have adopted Farrāj's suggestion of taking ʿUjāb to be a woman's name.

12 *Min jūʿihī muttakhim*: it sounds like a paradox.

13 This sounds like a quotation, but it has not been identified.

94 al-Jammāz al-Baṣrī[1]

Ibn Abī ʿArafah told me: al-Jammāz was one of the *mawlā*s of Quraysh. His {177}
teknonym was Abū ʿAbd Allāh, and he lived in ‖ [Basra].[2] He was a proficient, [372]
eloquent, and naturally gifted poet.

Abū l-Aswad al-Baṣrī told me: One night, Jaʿfar ibn al-Qāsim al-Hāshimī[3] went through the outskirts of Basra. In a certain street he came upon al-Jammāz in the company of a beardless boy. Al-Jammāz was a friend of Jaʿfar's. "Abū ʿAbd Allāh," said Jaʿfar, "At this time, in the dark night, and you are not at home? Come on, let me take you back to your family!" Al-Jammāz replied, "May God make the Emir prosper", and he pointed at the boy. Jaʿfar burst out laughing.

Ibn Abī l-Dirham told me: One day Abū ʿUthmān al-Māzinī[4] went to the mosque in Basra. He saw al-Jammāz with a beardless boy. "Abū ʿAbd Allāh," he said, "What are you doing here?" Al-Jammāz replied, "You odious man! I am hiring a boat."

Muḥammad ibn Muṣʿab told me:[5] Al-Jammāz was with Yaḥyā ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Bakhtakānī.[6] A servant came past, carrying a bowl. A drop of the broth fell on the clothes of al-Jammāz, who was annoyed. Yaḥyā said, "Don't worry, Abū ʿAbd Allāh, you can have a new shirt from me, or several!" Al-Jammāz replied, "No worries, may God make you prosper! For your broth does not spoil clothes." He meant that there was no fat in it. Al-Bakhtakānī laughed until he fell over backwards.

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1 Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad ibn ʿAmr ibn Ḥammād al-Jammāz (d. 255/869 or some time before), a nephew of Salm al-Khāsir (§15), a pupil of Abū ʿUbaydah, and an acquaintance of Abū Nuwās, was a poet of mostly satirical verse from Basra also active in Baghdad. He has entries in Yamūt ibn al-Muzarraʿ, *Amālī*, 56–57; al-Marzubānī, *Muʿjam*, 374–375; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, iv, 211–212; al-Samʿānī, *Ansāb*, ii, 81; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, vii, 70–71; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, iv, 291–293. See *GAS*, ii, 508–509; *EI2*, ii, 437, "al-Djammāz" (Ch. Pellat); *EAL*, 411 (P.F. Kennedy). He is often mentioned in anecdotes, see e.g. the section on him in al-Ābī, *Nathr al-durr*, iii, 252–258. His nickname was given him because he used to ride a "swift-footed" donkey (*jammāzah*), according to al-Zabīdī, *Tāj al-ʿarūs*, *JMZ*.

2 Parenthesis added by Farrāj from the *Mukhtaṣar*.

3 Jaʿfar ibn al-Qāsim ibn Jaʿfar ibn Sulaymān ibn ʿAlī al-Hāshimī was governor of Basra under al-Wāthiq and deposed after having lampooned the Caliph (al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xi, 123).

4 Abū ʿUthmān Bakr ibn Muḥammad al-Māzinī (d. 247/861 or a little later) was a philologist and Qur'an scholar from Basra.

5 For the following see al-Ābī, *Nathr al-durr*, iii, 252–253; Ibn Ḥamdūn, *Tadhkirah*, v, 174; Marzolph, *Arabia ridens*, ii, 184.

6 Or al-Bakhtikānī; not identified. The *nisbah* is uncommon; see al-Iṣfahānī, *Adab al-ghurabāʾ*, 78, where it is vowelled as al-Bukht.kānī. It is al-Bakhtikānī in the translation by Crone and

Abū Shurāʿah told me:[7] One day al-Jammāz was with Qutham ibn Jaʿfar al-Hāshimī.[8] A man came along asking for water. Qutham said to him, "Go into the hall!" and he told the servants to get him some water. [A servant][9] went in,
[373] ‖ but he came out in no time. "Where is the water?" asked Qutham. The servant replied, "Your mother said to me, 'Give me a written order!' "[10] The men laughed but Qutham was embarrassed.

Aḥmad ibn Khaṣīb al-Baṣrī told me:[11] Al-Jammāz was drinking together with some others. With them was a slave girl who was singing. While she was performing she farted, not loudly, which was heard only by al-Jammāz, for he was sitting close to her. The girl thought that he had not heard it, and that, if he had not heard it, the others would not have heard it either. When the cup came to al-Jammāz, she asked him, "Which song would you like me to sing for you, Abū ʿAbd Allāh?" He replied, "Sing '*O wind, what are you doing at the dung heaps* …' "[12] The girl laughed and said, "Don't tell the others!"

Among the verses by him that we have selected are these, [in praise of Abū ʿAmr Muḥammad al-Rūmī]:[13]

I have made you, Muḥammad, a refuge
for my needs and my longing for their fulfilment.
Some may be concerned with destroying noble deeds,
but Muḥammad's concern is to build them.

[Admired are these verses on love:[14]

Moreh, *The Book of Strangers*, 70, 120, with the discussion by the translators. For someone called Ibn al-Bakhtakān see above, p. 188.

7 On him see the next section.

8 Qutham ibn Jaʿfar ibn Sulaymān was governor of Basra at some time, see *Aghānī*, xix, 270, where also al-Jammāz and Abū l-ʿAtāhiyah are mentioned.

9 Parenthesis added by Farrāj, as the context seems to require.

10 An *ʿalāmah* is here an apostille, a written and signed order.

11 He is probably Abū ʿAlī Aḥmad ibn Ismāʿīl ibn Ibrāhīm ibn al-Khaṣīb, a state secretary and man of letters, see *EI2*, iii, 835, "Ibn al-Khaṣīb, Abū ʿAlī".

12 On *diman*, "traces of dung and droppings", see above, p. 122 note 71. For a variant of this story see *Aghānī*, xxiii, 138–139, not mentioning al-Jammāz but with the same hemistich, which is by ʿAlī ibn Umayyah ibn Abī Umayyah; for shorter versions see al-Thaʿālibī, *Nihāyah*, 85 (mentioning al-Jammāz), Ibn Ḥamdūn *Tadhkirah*, vii, 249, al-Ābī, *Nathr al-durr*, vi, 558.

13 The parenthesis is taken from the *Mukhtaṣar* (ed. Farrāj, Appendix, 456). Abū ʿAmr Muḥammad al-Rūmī has not been identified and the verses have not been found elsewhere.

14 Taken from the *Mukhtaṣar* (ed. Farrāj, Appendix, 456); the verses are not found elsewhere.

If your heart loves me,
why does abandonment toy with me in its middle?
If you tasted the sweetness of union, you would regret,
one day, what you missed by your fleeing.]

On al-Ḥusayn ibn al-Ḍaḥḥāk and his brother Abū Jaʿfar:[15]

Abū ʿAlī and Abū Jaʿfar
are the youngest known in al-ʿAskar.[16]
Each is a toddler without a nurse,
weaned on almonds and sugar.

On some uncongenial treatment he had from Jaʿfar ibn al-Qāsim he said:[17]

The Emir was unfriendly, having become a devoted Qur'an reader, [374]
so I, under duress, became one too, to placate him.
A divorce under duress is not a legal divorce,
as the Emir is taught by his religious scholars.
As for the sins that I keep hidden,
God in His heaven knows about me.

15 On al-Ḥusayn ibn al-Ḍaḥḥāk see above, § 46. The verses are not found elsewhere.

16 It is possible that *bi-l-ʿaskar* means "in the army" here, but I believe it is more likely to refer to a place, for instance ʿAskar Mukram, in Khūzistān near al-Ahwāz (*EI2*, i, 711 [M. Streck & L. Lockhart]), even though Farrāj does not list al-ʿAskar in his index of placenames.

17 See al-Qālī, *Dhayl al-Amālī*, 46, where it is told that his patron, here called Abū Jazʾ al-Bāhilī, has turned pious and tells him he will not have more dealings with him until he too becomes pious. Al-Jammāz makes a show of this and says the verses. Also in Ibn Durayd, *Taʿlīq*, 77; vss. 1, 3 anonymously in al-Rāghib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ii, 239.

95 Abū Shurāʿah[1]

{178} Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad ibn al-Qāsim told me: "I asked Abū Shurāʿah, 'How old are you?'—he was advanced in years. 'Ninety-two', he said. I asked, 'And what has Time left of you?' He replied, 'I have lost the pleasant life that I had. I have been aiming for things I inclined towards, but they would hold back from me, just as a refractory colt holds back. That is, apart from those female road-sweepers,[2] for whenever I concerned myself with them I would find in me a vigour as if I were twenty years old.' I said, 'My dear friend, I swear to God, that is a useful thing to know! Even the sage Hippocrates could not come up with anything like it!'. [He replied,][3] 'Take this advice, with thanks!'"

Abū Jaʿfar continued: "I told al-Maʾmūn about this. He asked, 'What do you think? Is it true?' 'No,' I said, 'but this is what I heard.' But I tried it—I did, not al-Maʾmūn!—and I found it even better than he said. After that, Abū Shurāʿah lived for a long time." His poetry was good, with charming motifs;[4] he was thoughtful. [His poetry has been collected; he composed panegyrics on seven caliphs.[5]] He lived until the days of al-Mutawakkil. [I met him[6] when he still had all his wits about him; that was the second meeting, in the days of al-Mutawakkil.] He had composed panegyric poems on al-Mahdī, the son of al-Manṣūr.[7] Al-Mutawakkil was good to him, because, as he said, "This man praised my forefathers and ancestors."

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1 Abū Shurāʿah Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Shurāʿah al-Qaysī al-Wāʾilī (of the tribe of Qays ibn Thaʿlabah, of Bakr ibn Wāʾil), a poet from Basra who also composed prose epistles and orations. He died, apparently at an advanced age, after 255/869. He has entries in *Aghānī*, xxiii, 21–36; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, vii, 404–405. According to *Aghānī*, xxiii, 22 he was slightly deranged (*kānat bihī lūthah wa-hawaj*), like other poets in the *Ṭabaqāt* (Abū Ḥayyah, §24; Ibn Abī l-Shīṣ, §90; and a series below, see §§99–102). See also *GAS*, ii, 509; *EI2*, *Suppl.*, 35 (Ch. Pellat). His poetry has been collected in al-Najjār, *Shuʿarāʾ ʿAbbāsiyyūn mansiyyūn*, ii, i, 137–152.

2 *Al-kassāḥāt*. Male road-sweepers are sometimes mentioned (*WKAS*, *Kāf*, 175), but I have not found female ones elsewhere.

3 Parenthesis added by Farrāj.

4 *Malīḥ al-maʿānī*: this contradicts what is said about his style in *Aghānī* ("not naturally delicate, not of easy diction, Bedouin-style in his verse").

5 This and the next parentheses are from the *Mukhtaṣar* (ed. Farrāj, Appendix, 457).

6 The speaker may be Abū Jaʿfar, for it is not clear where his report ends. If it is Ibn al-Muʿtazz, this is the only time where he speaks of personal contact with any of the poets in the book.

7 As Pellat argues in his entry on the poet, this is difficult to believe, because al-Mahdī died in 169/785.

Abū Shurāʿah said on him:[8] [375]

Why has Suʿdā broken her promise to me
and is ready to cut me off and keep me at a distance?
Suʿād, have I sinned in anything, apart from being a man
whose heart is preoccupied with loving you?
Once, you were close and not stingy,
but when you had made me hope for a tryst,
The lightning flashes of your favour were disappointing,
and the thunder of a promise turned out to be a lie.[9]

8 The following verses (not found elsewhere), a traditional opening *nasīb*, addressing a woman called Suʿdā / Suʿād, do not contain praise of al-Mutawakkil, which may have followed in the omitted part.

9 Lightning and thunder but no rain: a common motif expressing disappointment.

96 Abū Firʿawn al-Sāsī[1]

Abū Muḥriz al-Kūfī told me: Abū Firʿawn al-Sāsī went to Abū Kahmas the merchant, begging from him. The man gave him a large loaf made of white flour. Then Abū Firʿawn went to a gathering of the Banū ʿAdī. He stopped at the congregation, produced the loaf from his bag and threw it down in the middle of the session. "Banū ʿAdī!" he said, "Look and admire this masterly loaf! It is the noblest product on the face of the earth!" They said, "What is that?" He explained it to them. Then they all went to [Abū][2] Kahmas the merchant, saying, "You have set Abū Firʿawn on to us and he has torn us utterly to pieces!"[3]

Charming are the following verses by him. He was one of the most eloquent of people, one of the best poets, and one of those with the most curious anecdotes. He was, however, unable to give up begging.[4]

[376] I saw my fortune in a dream,
clothed like a shabby old man,
Blind, mute, scrawny,
father of sons and one daughter.
I said, "May you be given long life! Where's my sustenance?"
He replied, "Your sustenance is in my arse!"

1 Abū Firʿawn al-Taymī al-ʿAdawī, a Bedouin poet who moved to Basra, where he lived as a beggar, as Ibn al-Jarrāḥ says in the entry on him (*Waraqah*, 56–58). His *ism* is given there as Shuways, but this may be based on a confusion with Shuwaysh al-ʿAdawī, who lived at the time of the early conquests, see al-Balādhurī, *Jumal*, xi, 295–296 (where Abū Firʿawn, without *ism*, is also briefly mentioned). His *nisbah* given here, al-Sāsī, appears incorrectly as al-Nāshī in the MS; one also finds al-Shāshī (Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, i, 521, al-Tawḥīdī, *Imtāʿ*, iii, 34, 70). Assuming al-Sāsī is correct, it could be from Sāsī, a town near Wāsiṭ (thus Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-buldān*; in lexicons such as al-Zabīdī, *Tāj*, *sws*, it is called al-Sās). Nefeli Papoutsakis, however, plausibly interprets it as a shortened form of Sāsānī, i.e., "beggar" (the form *sāsī* is found in Steingass, *Persian-English Dictionary*, translated as "poor, indigent; a beggar"). Firʿawn ("Pharaoh", with negative connotations in Arabic) is not known as a personal name, so Abū Firʿawn is probably not a teknonym but a nickname. See on him *GAS*, ii, 524–525. Most of his poems are in *rajaz* metre; see Ullmann, *Untersuchungen*, 46 (where he is called "eine höchst unerfreuliche Erscheinung" [a most unpleasant character]), and on his begging poems see Papoutsakis, *Classical Arabic Begging Poetry*, 50–54. His poems have been collected in al-Najjār, *Shuʿarāʾ ʿAbbāsiyyūn mansiyyūn*, II, iii, 73–88.

2 Farrāj emends *Ibn*, as in the MS, to *Abū*. One notes that Abū Firʿawn mentions Kahmas (without Abū or Ibn) in an obscene verse quoted in al-Jāḥiẓ, al-*Bighāl* (*Rasāʾil*, ii, 315).

3 The last words allude to Q Saba' 34:19. The point is apparently that Abū Firʿawn has shamed his fellow tribesmen by insinuating that they are incapable of matching such generosity.

4 See al-Balādhurī, *Jumal*, xi, 295–296; for another translation see Papoutsakis, *Classical Arabic Begging Poetry*, 53.

Now, how can I get a laxative
to loosen my fortune's bowels?

He also said,[5]

That I lock my door is not because I fear
anything in it could be stolen:
I have locked it so that no passer-by in the streets
will see my poor state.
It is a dwelling where poverty has made its home;
if a robber entered he would himself be robbed.[6]
You'll find I am not lying in describing it:
if you saw it, you'd say, "He has spoken the truth."

He also said,[7] {179}

Those young children, like ant's grubs!
With black faces, black like the cooking-pot.
Winter has come and they are in a bad state,
Without a shirt, without a loincloth.
When, at last, dawn breaks
And morning arrives, I set out,
With some of them clinging to my breast
And some others crouching on my lap,
While I outstrip them, moving to the base of the walls.[8]
This is my whole story and my case.
So have pity on my children and take care of my case!
I have given myself a nickname in my verse:
I am Abū l-Faqr ("Father of Poverty") and Umm al-Faqr ("Mother of Poverty").

5 Vss. 1–3 anonymously in Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, vi, 217; vss. 1–3 with a fourth vs., attributed to "a Bedouin in Basra", in al-Bayhaqī, *Maḥāsin*, 278–279. For another translation see Papoutsakis, *Classical Arabic Begging Poetry*, 52.

6 Instead of *suriqā*, *Maḥāsin* has *shuriqā*, "he would be choked (with tears)".

7 The poem is in *rajaz* metre. Several versions, with many variants, are quoted: Ibn al-Jarrāḥ, *Waraqah*, 57 (vss. 1–5, 7–10 with some more vss.); Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, iii, 435 (8 vss. attributed to "a Bedouin"); al-Bayhaqī, *Maḥāsin*, 584–585. For another translation see Papoutsakis, *Classical Arabic Begging Poetry*, 51–52.

8 As Papoutsakis explains: "in order to sun and warm themselves". *Waraqah* adds here: "They (the children) look like dung-beetles in a hole."

[377] This poem is one of the best. A poem in which he follows the path of seriousness is the one about al-Ḥasan ibn Sahl;[9] all people are agreed on its beauty and eloquence. It is this:[10]

May rain fall on a tribe in al-Liwā[11] that I have known,
a long time ago; now this is their abode.[12]
I used to know them when life was still in its first prime[13]
and misfortunes had not yet befallen the tribesmen,
And they had not yet separated, cast far and wide,
which severed the bonds I shared with them.
I wish I knew if there is still a place where they may be sought,
or whether I will find others in their place, one day!
People are of different kinds[14] if they are compared;
some are good, and you are the best of them,
Except for the Commander of the Believers: he is
the Caliph, placeholder, of God; you are their father-in-law.[15]

9 On him see above, p. 417.

10 The poem, in six-feet *rajaz* (i.e., with each verse consisting of two hemistichs) is not by Abū Firʿawn but by Abū ʿUthmān Saʿīd ibn Ḍamḍam al-Kilābī, see GAS, ii, 526 and Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, i, 127, where vs. 1 of the poem is quoted and said to be addressed to al-Ḥasan ibn Sahl (also in al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xv, 227). A longer version of the poem (45 vss.) is found in al-Bayhaqī, *Maḥāsin*, 308–310, attributed to "Saʿīd ibn Ṣ.mṣ.m", an error for ibn Ḍamḍam (in my *Sound and Sense*, 185 I wrongly called the poet Saʿīd ibn Ṣimṣim and I failed to see that this poem and the one attributed to Abū Firʿawn are in fact versions of the same poem). Like the preceding poem it describes the poet's starving children, but, as Papoutsakis remarks, its style is very different from Abū Firʿawn's. Ibn al-Muʿtazz quotes vss. 1–4, 23–29, 37–38, 31–33 of the version in *Maḥāsin* and adds two vss. not found there. Ibn al-Nadīm calls it a "fine poem" with a rhyme that is unprecedented. This rhyme is consistently the personal pronominal suffix *-hum*, "them/their", which is very unusual; using pronouns for the rhyme is normally allowed, as a kind of licence, by the critics and prosodists only when occurring occasionally.

11 *Liwā* means "twisted sand", but there are several locations called Liwā followed by a genitive (see Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-buldān*), so a specific place may be meant here.

12 I read, with *Maḥāsin*, *rabʿuhum* instead of *ʿahduhum*, "their covenant/acquaintance/(past) time …"

13 Reading *ghurratun*, as vowelled in *Maḥāsin*, but *ghirratun*, "heedlessness", as vowelled by Farrāj, is also possible.

14 I prefer to read *ajnās*, with *Maḥāsin*, instead of *ashbāh*, "resembling (one another)"; Eghbal suggests *ashbāḥ* ("shapes, apparitions").

15 *Ṣihr* means "kinsman by marriage, father- or brother-in-law". Al-Ḥasan ibn Sahl was the father-in-law of al-Maʾmūn, who had married his daughter Būrān. One would therefore have expected "*his* father-in-law" and perhaps the rhyme turned it into a strange metaphor.

They managed their affairs well when they gave sincere advice
and they were safe from reproach; their advice was lasting.[16]
It is to you that I complain, regarding young children and their mother:
they have not eaten their fill; likewise their father.
They have eaten meat[17] but it did not fill them;
they drank water and they drank for a long time.
They drank milk mixed with water, but it was no substitute for them;
chewing food, if only they could, would be a feast for them.
They know bread only by name;
and dates? No chance, they haven't any!
They have never seen fruit at the market,
nor have they seen it coming their way.
Their heads are thin-haired, their pates are bald
from misery, their ears have become deaf.
It is as if they are a barren land, [378]
a drought; if they were given something they would miss their share.
Yes, if you saw them, you would know that they
are people who rarely drink and eat their fill.
Their donkey is mangy, its back hollow,
and like the stalks of thistles is their dog.
Though I am master of them all, it is as if
they were my lords and I their slave,
Working hard to guide them, untiring
in praying for them. O Lord, save their mother![18]

16 The purport is somewhat obscure. This is one of the two verses not found in *Maḥāsin*; the other is vs. 14.

17 Instead of *al-laḥm*, *Maḥāsin* has *al-waḥsh*, "wild animals".

18 Instead of *ummahum*, *Maḥāsin* has *amrahum*, "their affair, case".

97 Abū l-Fiḍḍah al-Baṣrī[1]

Muḥammad ibn al-Ashʿath told me: Abū l-Fiḍḍah was a descendant of the *mawlā*s of Zubaydah.[2] He sold woven mats[3] and he was a neat, elegant person. He
{180} competed with Ibn Abī Khālid, who was the better poet. Ibn Abī ‖ Khālid is the one who said on Yaḥyā ibn Aktham:[4]

> A judge who believes in the prescribed punishment for fornication,
> but finds nothing wrong with those who commit pederasty!
> Our commander takes bribes, our judge
> is a pederast: what a bad leadership!
> I do not think injustice will end as long as the nation
> is ruled by a ruler of the Abbasids.

Abū l-Fiḍḍah was a chaste man. Abū l-Aʿmash told me: Once, Abū l-Fiḍḍah found himself in a place that in days of old was known as the Place of the Impudent Ones.[5] Some libertines lived there who would force anyone who
[379] came along ‖ to commit depravity and fornication, and to drink wine. When Abū l-Fiḍḍah came past they apprehended him and took him inside a house. They brought a woman to him and said, "You shall have intercourse with her or else we'll kill you!" He replied, "Men! Fear God! That is something I shall not do, and I have never done it." But they swore that they would kill him if he did not comply. When he saw this, he went in. She was an attractive young girl

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1 Abū l-Fiḍḍah ("Father of Silver", clearly a nickname) is a very obscure poet. Al-Marzubānī, *Muʿjam*, 512 merely gives his name in his enumeration of names beginning with Abū, and entries on him are not found in the usual works of reference.

2 Hārūn al-Rashīd's principal wife; see above, p. 303.

3 The MS and the edition have *al-khamr*, "wine", but I have adopted the more plausible reading of the *Mukhtaṣar*, *al-ḥuṣur* (or *al-ḥuṣr*), "woven mats", which, as Farrāj says, fits better with the pious character described below; Muslims are forbidden to sell wine.

4 Aḥmad ibn Abī Khālid was a state secretary under al-Maʾmūn (d. 211/826–827), see *EI2*, i, 271 (D. Sourdel); Yaḥyā ibn Aktham (d. 242/857) was Chief Judge during the reign of al-Maʾmūn. He had a reputation of being a pederast; see *EI2*, xi, 246. (C.E. Bosworth) and see e.g. al-Thaʿālibī, *Thimār*, 156–158. The verses are from a poem of ten verses ascribed in most other sources to Aḥmad ibn Abī Nuʿaym, see al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, xvi, 287–288; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh*, lxiv, 81–82; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, vi, 153–154; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xxviii, 77–78. See also al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, iv, 317–318 (4 vss.); al-Thaʿālibī, *Thimār*, 158; Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, iv, 35. In Ibn Abī Ṭāhir, *Baghdād*, 212–213 the poem is attributed to Jahshawayh.

5 *Maḥallat al-ʿutāh*; the singular *ʿātī* means "arrogant, impudent, insolent, presumptuous, unruly, etc.". Nothing is known about such a place.

with a pretty face. They locked the door on the two. Abū l-Fiḍḍah said to the girl, "Would you like to do a good thing"? She asked, "What is it?" "I swear to God," said he, "You are the best anyone could wish for, but I am loath to bring myself to open this door for me. Now, you will gain God's favour if you save me from these people, by saying, 'He's done it!' " But the girl said, "Hey man, I am ashamed on your behalf, for your lack of religion! Are you telling me to tell a lie on a Friday?!"[6]

Abū l-Fiḍḍah composed a fine elegy on a girl, which has been collected among the longer elegies It opens with this verse:[7]

> People, early in the morning, have taken your bosom friend
> to the rubble heaps of the desolate abode,

It is a famous poem that is widely found among people.

6 The following entry, on Abū l-Shibl, offers an anecdote with another instance of such incongruent piety.

7 Despite its declared fame, the poem is not found elsewhere.

98 Abū l-Shibl[1]

Abū l-Azhar al-Kūfī told me:[2] Abū l-Shibl al-Kūfī said, "Maḥmūd al-Warrāq and I went to Quṭrabbul, where we called for the wine merchant. 'Bring us an old wine', we said, 'that has been ripened by the midday sun!' He brought it, and
[380] we said, 'Sit down, drink, and pour the wine for us!' He gave us a wry look ‖ and said, 'I am a Muslim;'—he was a Jew who had converted—'are you telling me to drink wine?'" Abū l-Shibl continued, "Maḥmūd al-Warrāq looked at me and said, 'People such as this wine merchant, who is a scrupulous Muslim: do you think that God needs such people?' I replied, 'No, I swear to God!'"[3]

Abū l-Agharr al-Asadī told me:[4] Abū l-Shibl praised Mālik ibn Ṭawq with a wonderful poem for which he hoped to get one thousand dirhams. Mālik gave him a purse with one hundred dinars;[5] but Abū l-Shibl did not open it and gave it back with a piece of paper with these two verses:

O, if only the generous gift of Mālik's hand,
and Mālik too, were stuck up Mālik's mother's arse!
And left stuck up there until the Day of Resurrection!
A most negligible loss, a most insignificant death!

At the time Mālik was military governor of al-Ahwāz. When he had read the two verses he summoned the poet, who was brought to him. "Man!" he said, "Why have we deserved such a thing from you?" Abū l-Shibl replied, "I have praised you in a poem for which I had hoped to get one thousand dirhams, but

1 Abū l-Shibl ʿUṣm (or ʿĀṣim) ibn Wahb ibn ʿIṣmah al-Burjumī, of the tribe of Tamīm, a poet born in Kufa, who also lived in Basra, Baghdad, and Samarra during the reign of al-Mutawakkil. He has entries in al-Marzubānī, *Muʿjam*, 123; *Aghānī*, xiv, 192–210; al-Āmidī, *Muʾtalif*, 175; Ibn al-Najjār, *Dhayl Tārīkh Baghdād*, ii, 264–265; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xx, 200–201. His *ism* is ʿUṣm in all sources except *Aghānī*, which has ʿĀṣim, followed by Sezgin (*GAS*, ii, 536) and some other modern scholars.

2 For another version of the following see *Aghānī*, xiv, 197–198; al-Shābushtī, *Diyārāt* (ed. ʿAwwād), 51–52, (ed, & tr. Kilpatrick), 60–61. For Maḥmūd al-Warrāq, see above, § 91. Quṭrabbul, not far from Baghdad, was famous for its wine (see *EI2*, v, 566, "Ḳuṭrabbul" [J. Lassner]).

3 In the more outrageous (and one hopes largely fictional) version of *Aghānī* the wine-seller is said to be a Jew, not a convert to Islam (a Muslim would in any case not be allowed to sell wine); the two men drink, get drunk, rape the wine-seller's daughter, his wife, and his sister, steal his clothes, and defecate in his stored date-wine.

4 *Aghānī*, xiv, 194 (quoting Ibn al-Muʿtazz), al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xx, 201. Mālik ibn Ṭawq al-Taghlibī (d. 259/872–873 or 260), a general and governor, generous patron of poets, among them Abū Tammām.

5 One gold dinar was worth at least ten silver dirhams but usually much more.

you rewarded me with one hundred!" "Open the purse!" said Mālik. He opened it and see! it contained one hundred dinars. Abū l-Shibl was embarrassed and said, "Please, forgive me, commander!" Mālik said, "I forgive you."

ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad al-Khazarī told me: Abū Muḥriz told me: Abū l-Shibl said,[6] There was with us a man who was a jurist, a religious man. He had a son, a young man who kept making ‖ a certain pretty slave girl pregnant. {181} When the girl gave birth he would ask his father if he would buy the child. When his old man would discern a likeness to his son he would take pity on the child and buy it, ‖ raise it, and treat it well. When this happened again and again, he [381] said to him, "My son, I keep admonishing you and scolding you, but it is all of no avail, it is no use. Now, if you must go on doing this, practise withdrawal!" The son answered, "Dad, I have heard that withdrawal is reprehensible!" The father replied, "You godsend to ill-wishers! You fornicate but you have scruples about withdrawal?!"[7]

6 In the version of the following in *Aghānī*, xiv, 197 the young man is Abū l-Shibl's own son and only two pregnancies are mentioned. Short anecdotes with the same point about an unnamed man are in Ibn Qutaybah, *ʿUyūn*, ii, 53 and al-Rāghib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ii, 159; and see Marzolph, *Arabia ridens*, ii, 47, with more references.

7 According to most legal schools in Islam, coitus interruptus (*ʿazl* or *iʿtizāl*, "withdrawing") is allowed or only mildly reprehensible; see *EI2*, i, 826, "ʿAzl" (G.H. Bousquet).

99 Juʿayfirān al-Muwaswis[1]

Aḥmad ibn Ibrāhīm al-Qummī told me, on the authority of Aḥmad ibn Yūsuf al-Kātib, who said:[2] "I was with Abū Dulaf when his chamberlain entered, saying that Juʿayfirān al-Muwaswis was at the door. Abū Dulaf said, 'What have we to do with madmen? Have we done with all the sound of mind then?'" Aḥmad continued, "I said, 'But, I swear to God, he is witty and his poetry is nice.' Abū Dulaf said, 'Let him come in then.' So he entered, and when he stood before him, he began to recite:

O most noble of the nation when found
and the most distressing of the nation when missed!
When I asked people about someone
who is to be praised in the whole world,
They all said: That is Qāsim,
who resembles his ancestors, proud princes!"

Aḥmad continued: "Abū Dulaf looked at him and said, 'Truly said, by God! I wish all poets spoke like that!' He gave orders for the poet to be given one thousand dirhams and a robe of honour. Juʿayfirān said, 'I'll wear this robe when I leave, but give those thousand dirhams to the steward and tell him to give me five every time I come, for I am afraid that they may be stolen from me or that I may lose them.' Abū Dulaf said, 'You, So-and-so, take one thousand from the treasurer and give him five whenever he comes. And when the thousand are finished, take the same amount and spend them, five dirhams regularly
[382] whenever he comes, without interruption until ‖ our or his death parts us!'" Then Juʿayfirān looked at Aḥmad and said,

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1 Here begins a series of entries on poets deemed mad (*muwaswis* or *majnūn*). On these, see my article "Foul Whisperings"; on madness in general in premodern Arabic see Dols, *Majnūn*. On the term *muwaswis*, "suffering from *waswās*, 'whisperings', delusions or hallucinations", see "Foul Whisperings", 153–155; lexicographers specify that it should be read as *muwaswis*, an active participle, not as the passive participle, *muwaswas*, but both forms are found. Abū l-Faḍl Jaʿfar ibn ʿAlī ibn Aṣfar, known as Juʿayfirān ("little Jaʿfar") al-Muwaswis, "the Delusional", was a poet from Baghdad who was active in Samarra in the first half of the 3rd/9th century. He is listed by al-Jāḥiẓ (*Bayān*, ii, 225, 227–227) among "mad poets". He has entries in *Aghānī*, xx, 186–196; Ibn Ḥabīb, *ʿUqalāʾ al-majānīn*, 186–196; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, viii, 44–45; al-Nashshābī, *Mudhākarah*, 260–262; Ibn Shākir, *Fawāt*, i, 297–299; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xi, 168–171; and *see* GAS, ii, 602, van Gelder, "Foul Whisperings", 156–161.

2 For the following anecdote and the verses see Ibn Abī Ṭāhir, *Baghdād*, 168–169; *Aghānī*, xx, 193–194; Ibn Ḥabīb, *ʿUqalāʾ*, 193–194; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh*, xlix, 142–143 (in the entry on Abū Dulaf, whose *ism* is Qāsim); Waṭwāṭ, *Ghurar*, 343.

This man you see will die,
and everything will come to an end!
But if anyone could live forever,
then this generous benefactor should live forever.

Abū Dulaf was much impressed by his words. He said to Aḥmad ibn Yūsuf, "You knew better about your friend!"

Aḥmad also said: One day Juʿayfirān was standing in Kufa, calling out, "Let me be your guest!" But nobody responded. Then he produced five dirhams and said to someone, "Buy me some dates and get me a jug of water and a mat." The man did this. "Spread out the mat," he told him, "throw [the dates][3] on it, and put the water down." Then Juʿayfirān called out, "People of Kufa, I asked you for hospitality, but you did not give it to me. Now come to me and eat!" And he recited:

If God were to enter in a quarrel with one of His creatures
I would quarrel with my Lord about those creatures I see,
And I would say, amazed by what I see from them,
"O my God, what are those good for?"

3 Parenthesis added by Farrāj.

100 Mānī the Madman[1]

Aḥmad ibn ʿĀṣim ibn Qudāmah al-Ḍumayrī informed me, saying, "One day I saw Mānī the Madman at the Karkh Gate in Baghdad, naked, holding a sugar-
{182} cane.[2] He looked sad, and he was saying these verses, and nothing ‖ else:[3]

From one street to
another is her course,
Just as a bride
is fleeing from divorce.

I asked him what it meant, and he said, 'The she-camel.' He sat down. When the camels used for transport arrived, he got up and followed them for a while; then he returned to where he was. This he did the whole day."

Abū Shajarah told me: Mānī the Madman was one of the best poets. He said:[4]

Slim-waisted girls who kill with charming glances:
they stab us with wide eyes as if with lances.
Beauty has made their eyes as black as coal,
as if made up with kohl, not needing kohl.
They struggle when they step, they hardly budge,
as if they move their feet through mud or sludge.

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1 Abū l-Ḥasan (or al-Ḥusayn) Muḥammad ibn Qāsim (d. 245/859), known as Mānī l-Muwaswis or, as here, al-Majnūn, "the Madman", came from Egypt to Baghdad. He was close to Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Ṭāhir. Perhaps he was named after Mānī, the founder of Manichaeism; or it means "manic", for the Greek word μανία was known, as *māniyā*, to at least some Arabic authors. The main sources on him are al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, v, 83–86; Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, vi, 168–169; *Aghānī*, xxiii, 180–187; al-Marzubānī, *Muʿjam*, 387; Ibn Ḥabīb, *ʿUqalāʾ*, 260–265; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdād, *Tārīkh*, iv, 283–294; al-Nashshābī, *Mudhākarah*, 256–259; Ibn Shākir, *Fawāt*, iv. 32–34; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, iv, 346–349; and see GAS, ii, 558–559, van Gelder, "Foul Whisperings", 162–165. His poetry has been collected by ʿĀdil al-ʿĀmil (Mānī l-Muwaswis, *Shiʿr*) and see al-Najjār, *Shuʿarāʾ ʿAbbāsiyyūn mansiyyūn*, II, ii, 229–263.

2 See above, § 82, p. 505.

3 Not found in other sources. It uses an unusual, very short metre (xxsl sll | xxsl sll). I am quoting my rhymed translation from "Foul Whisperings", 164.

4 Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, iv, 284; al-Nashshābī, *Mudhākarah*, 259; attributed to Ṣāliḥ ibn ʿAbd al-Quddūs in Abū Tammām, *Waḥshiyyāt*, 329 and al-Rāghib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ii, 179; anonymously in *al-Ḥikāyāt al-ʿajībah*, 109; vss. 1–2 are attributed to Ibrāhīm ibn al-Mahdī in al-Ṣūlī, *Awrāq*, iii, 44; vs. 3 is quoted anonymously in al-Khālidiyyān, *Ashbāh*, i, 209. I quote vss. 1–2, 4 from my rhymed translation in *Classical Arabic Literature*, 321–322 (based on the slightly different text in *al-Ḥikāyāt al-ʿajībah*).

And he said:[5]

May I be deprived of my ignorance and may I lose my stupidity!
I have misdirected the path of my passionate love.
I uttered a lie in jest
and I said to him—but I did not speak the truth—
"I am a lover made sleepless for the love of you!"
And I removed all pure sincerity from my speech.
Instantly, when I inclined (to him), he embraced me[6]
with a lizard's face, the panting (?) of a wolf,[7]
With sparrow's legs, a monkey's snout,
the odour of latrines, the stench of the inside of his mouth.
You can see what his lips disclosed to me:
it is as if his gums sipped on a double dose of glue.

5 Not found elsewhere. I have quoted my translation in "Foul Whisperings", 165.

6 Perhaps one should adopt Farrāj's suggestion of reading *qultu*, "I spoke" instead of *miltu*, "I inclined".

7 The editors are silent on *wa-n.hāḥi silqī*: I have assumed a non-attested verbal noun *nahāj* or *nihāj*, from *nahaja*, "to pant"; or one could read *nubāḥ*, "barking" or its variant *nubāj*.

[384] **101 Abū Ḥayyān al-Muwaswis**[1]

Ṭāhir ibn Muḥammad al-Ahwāzī told me: I saw Abū Ḥayyān al-Muwaswis after he had arrived in Baghdad, coming from Basra. He had only one concern: to buy a large Mādharāyā jar.[2] He went to the Tigris and filled it. Then he went to the Ṣarāh canal and emptied it there. Then he carried water from the Ṣarāh canal and poured it into the Tigris. He kept doing this the length of his days in Baghdad until he died. He did not have any employment or job except this. When it got dark at night he would put the jar down and sit crying over it, saying "O God, give me relief and lighten for me this work I am doing!"

Muslim ibn ʿAbd Allāh told me: I saw Abū Ḥayyān al-Muwaswis when he came from Basra, being besotted with pouring water, carrying it from one place to another and pouring it out. When people asked him about it he would say, "If I didn't do this every day I would die".

We have memorised these verses by Abū Ḥayyān:

Don't weep because of Hind or the sandy tracts,
nor about an abode that once you knew to be inhabited,
But stop at Quṭrabbul and its pleasure ground,
and halt there your reddish camels on your journey,
And visit an old man who lives in the monastery,
called "priest" by the people of Scripture.[3]
He has not amassed many things to possess
except a cross and a wooden clapper.[4]
[385] And he came, a wine-skin on his shoulder,
carrying to me a portion to be scoffed at.[5]
I went to him; he shrank from me, frightened.
"Mūsā!" I said; He replied, "No, ʿĪsā!"[6]

1 Abū Ḥayyān al-Muwaswis, who would nowadays be diagnosed as having an obsessive-compulsive disorder, has not been found in other sources. See on him van Gelder, "Foul Whisperings", 161–162.

2 The MS and the editions have *jarrah m.dāriyya*; the *Mukhtaṣar* has *mādh.riyyah*, which Farrāj cannot identify. I have assumed it derives from Mādharāyā, a village near Wāsiṭ in Iraq (see Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-buldān* s.v.).

3 At Quṭrabbul there was a monastery called Dayr Ushmūnī, see al-Shābushtī, *Diyārāt* (ed. ʿAwwād), 46–53, (ed. & tr. Kilpatrick), 54–63.

4 A *nāqūs*, sometimes translated as "church bell", is usually a wooden clapper or rattle, used to call to prayer.

5 Farrāj thinks that *manqūsā* may be a corruption of *mankūsā* ("turned upside down"), perhaps meaning the wine-skin.

6 ʿĪsā is the Muslim Arabic form of "Jesus" (the Christian Arabic equivalent would be Yasūʿ).

He poured into the cup a limpid wine,
from a vine the stalks of which were not ravished by grubs.[7]

[Abū Ḥayyān composed many charming libertine and Bacchic poems.][8] ‖ Abū Ḥayyān was suffering from delusions towards the end of his life. His speech was confused, but his poetry was not confused at all. It is thus with those poets who become deranged after having made poetry before: their normal speech is strongly affected, but when they turn to verse they proceed at will, in the way they were accustomed before suffering from delusions. {183}

7 Tentative translation of *lam yaftaris ʿūdu karmihā l-sūsā*, as if it were … *ʿūda karmihā l-sūsū*.
8 The parenthesis is taken from the *Mukhtaṣar* (ed. Farrāj, Appendix, 457).

102 Muṣʿab al-Muwaswis[1]

Jaʿfar ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-Khuraymī[2] told me: Muṣʿab was walking in Ice Street in Baghdad when he saw the eye of a ewe behind a lattice of a small window of a merchant's shop. He thought it was a girl's eye and it was love at first sight. He kept coming off and on to that place for a month, and then he stayed there and did not leave. The ewe was tied up at the side of that place. He could sometimes see its eye but not the whole animal. The matter had completely taken hold of him and he stayed where he was. Whenever he felt nobody could hear him he would speak to the ewe, complain to it, and cry, not doubting that it listened. Sometimes he would throw it a perfumed, inscribed apple,[3] or a split citron,[4]
[386] or a melon, or some pretty thing, such as ‖ a kerchief and the like. One day the lattice broke. He looked, and lo, it was a ewe's eye! Some young children found out about it and began to shout, "Hey, ewe lover!" He got angry and the matter came to a head for him: it was why Muṣʿab became delusional.

Ibn Bakkār[5] told me: Muṣʿab al-Muwaswis said:[6] "The sciences are ten: three are Chosroan, three are Greek, three are Arab, and there's one that swipes away all others. The Chosroan ones are playing the lute, playing chess, and playing

1 Muṣʿab "the Delusional", al-Muwaswis, has a brief entry in al-Marzubānī, *Muʿjam*, 328 but is not found in other reference works.

2 Farrāj adopts Eghbal's emendation of al-Ḥarīmī/al-Ḥuraymī, but the *nisbah*s al-Ḥarīmī and al-Ḥuraymī are also found.

3 For the custom of inscribing apples see e.g. al-Washshāʾ, *Muwashshā*, 165–167.

4 Farrāj thinks that *mufallaqah* may mean "dried" (*mujaffafah*) here.

5 Al-Zubayr ibn Bakkār is a scholar often quoted in literary sources; on him see *EI2*, xi, 551–552 (S. Leder); he died in 257/870 when Ibn al-Muʿtazz was a young boy. If the ʿAbd Allāh mentioned in the following report is the same person, this Ibn Bakkār may be his son (*Aghānī*, xiii, 122 mentions a Ṭalḥah ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn al-Zubayr ibn Bakkār). However, "ʿAbd Allāh" is more likely to be Ibn al-Muʿtazz himself.

6 "Chosroan" (*Kisrawiyyah*, from Kisrā, the Arabic form of Persian Khusraw) here means "Persian". This saying about *al-ʿulūm*, "the sciences" or "fields of knowledge", resembles the one on the ten *ādāb* (forms of *adab*, here meaning skills and disciplines belonging to good breeding and education), attributed to al-Ḥasan ibn Sahl, see e.g. al-Ḥuṣrī, *Zahr*, 196, or to his brother Dhū l-Riyāsatayn (al-Faḍl ibn Sahl) in al-Zamakhsharī, *Rabīʿ*, iii, 296, and anonymously in al-Rāghib, *Muḥāḍarāt* i, 93: "There are ten *ādāb*. Three are Shahrijānī, three are Anūsharwānī, three are Arab, and one is superior to the others. The Shahrijānī ones are playing the lute, playing chess, and playing polo; the Anūsharwānī ones are medicine, geometry, and horsemanship; the Arab ones are poetry, genealogy, and history. The one that is superior to the rest is storytelling, nightly conversation, and what people discuss in gatherings." "Anūsharwānī" refers to the 6th-century Sasanid emperor Khusraw Anūsharwān; "Shahrijānī" is derived from Pahlavi *shahrīgān*, "Persian landed proprietors, nobles" (sometimes appearing as *shahārijah* in Arabic texts).

polo. The Greek ones are geometry, medicine, and astronomy. The Arab ones are grammar, jurisprudence, and poetry. As for the one that swipes away all the others, that is the knowledge of reports and anecdotes about modern people."[7]

Ibn Bakkār told me: Muṣʿab said to me, "I asked a boy I saw coming from the Department,[8] 'Which scribes of your department are the best writers?' [He replied,][9] 'Those best at paring the pen.'"

The following verses by Muṣʿab al-Muwaswis are fine:[10]

My passion for that arrogant one has worn me out, but
he only grows stronger by my love the more I fear him.
I kept being sly until he was pacified,
though before that he detested me.
I brought him a cup of wine to slay him;
I used to stir up people like him.

ʿAbd Allāh[11] said: The verses transmitted by people as being by ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad ibn Naṣr ibn Bassām are in fact by Muṣʿab al-Muwaswis. They are the following:[12]

A pudding made with sugar
and a casserole cooked with a lark
At a man's place, who with his good planning
puts two pans on a brazier!

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7 *Akhbār al-muḥdathīn wa-ayyāmuhum*. To call gossiping a "science" is unconventional and provocative, but not necessarily a sign of madness. The word *muḥdathīn*, "moderns" could of course be interpreted as "modern poets", and then the present book precisely corresponds to this "science".

8 *Al-Dīwān*; there were in fact many *dīwān*s or "departments"; see e.g. *EI2*, ii, 324–326, "Dīwān—The ʿAbbāsid period" (A.A. Duri).

9 Parenthesis added by Farrāj.

10 Al-Marzubānī, *Muʿjam*, 328.

11 This is apparently the author, Ibn al-Muʿtazz.

12 In other sources the verses are attributed to ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad ibn Bassām al-ʿAbartāʾī (d. 302/914 or 303/915, see *GAS*, ii, 589) and said to be about his father: al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, v, 199 (with a fifth vs.); al-Ḥuṣrī, *Jamʿ*, 223 (vss. 1–3), al-Raqīq, *Quṭb al-surūr*, 775 (vss. 1, 3); Ibn Sayyār al-Warrāq, *Ṭabīkh*, 341 (vss. 1–3 with an additional vs., translated in Nasrallah, *Annals of the Caliphs' Kitchens*, 515). For recipes for the dish (*khabīṣah*) see e. g. Ibn Sayyār al-Warrāq, *Ṭabīkh*, 246–259 (tr. Nasrallah, *Annals*, 388–401), Perry, *Medieval Arab Cookery*, 413–415.

But this does not happen always with him,
but at a bad invitation by him,[13]
[387] On a mouth-watering[14] day of revelry
with many delights and gurgling water.[15]

He composed much good poetry.

13 The interpretation of *hādhā lahū fī l-daʿwati l-munkarah* is not clear in this version. In *Quṭb al-surūr* the poet's father complains, saying, "with '*al-daʿwah al-munkarah*' he makes me someone who feigns hospitaliy (*jaʿalanī mutaṣanniʿan muḥtafilan*)." The invective becomes clear with the final verse given in *Murūj* and *Ṭābīkh*: "He says to the eater of his bread, 'How big is that wretched belly!'"

14 Tentative translation of *hāʾilun rīquhū* (taking *hāʾil* from HYL, not HWL).

15 Instead of *wa-l-kharkharah* one could read, with *Murūj*, *wa-l-qarqarah*, "and loud laughter."

103 Jaḥshawayh[1]

Yaqẓān ibn Muḥammad al-Khazarī told me: Jaḥshawayh said: "One day I came home finding ‖ a young man fucking a donkey. When he saw me, he was embarrassed and dismayed; he tried to flee but I did not let him escape. 'You son of a so-and-so!' I said, 'What made you do this?' He replied, 'O my God! Master, my tool was standing, but when I saw you it sat down!' He was not a native Arabic speaker. I liked what he said and I let him go." {184}

Abū Naṣr, the *mawlā* of the Banū Bajīlah told me: Jaḥshawayh was one of the most active homosexual partners, and very far from how he described himself. He would describe himself as a passive partner.[2] He composed some charming verses, not describing reality:[3]

> Better than a girl with large black eyes,
> With a good figure,[4] flat-bellied, thick-haired,
> Wearing a sash, a white-skinned, tender girl;
> Or than a vintage wine mixed with water;
> Or than the halting of a weeping man
> At an abode devoid of a courtyard,[5]
> Is the prick of a beardless young watercarrier[6]

1 Almost nothing is known about Jaḥshawayh (or Jaḥshūyah, cf. Wagner, *Abū Nuwās*, 101, n. 1: "Ǧaḥšōye"). He has no entries in the regular reference works but is mentioned or quoted in several sources, including al-Jāḥiẓ, *Bayān*, iii, 58 (4 verses), idem, *Ḥayawān*, v, 341 (two verses) and iv, 181, where al-Jāḥiẓ says that many verses on *ḥulāq* (a craving for being a passive sexual partner) are falsely attributed to him. For his reputation of being a self-professed pathic (but falsely), see above, p. 452 above and see Ḥamzah al-Iṣfahānī in Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān*, iv, 1: "Jaḥshawayh composed all his poetry on the description of *ubnah* ('craving for being a pathic'), claiming to suffer from it himself; but he was a greater bugger (*alwaṭ*) than Dubb." *Dubb* means "bear", and in some sources the phrase *alwaṭ min dubb* is listed among sayings on animals (al-Ābī, *Nathr al-durr*, vi, 187, Ibn Ḥamdūn, *Tadhkirah*, vii, 21). To my knowledge, bears are not singled out for homosexual practice in premodern Arab lore or modern zoology. Elsewhere, Dubb is said to be the name of an otherwise unknown Arab (al-ʿAskari, *Jamharat al-amthāl*, ii, 183; al-Maydānī, *Majmaʿ*, ii, 299; al-Damīrī, *Ḥayāt al-ḥayawān*, i, 326) and I have opted for this interpretation.

2 *Kāna yansubu nafsahū ilā l-bighāʾ*. The normal meaning of *bighāʾ* "fornication, adultery, prostitution".

3 Not found elsewhere.

4 The text has *maʿdūdah*, "counted", also "esteemed, reckoned as good", but the context suggests that it may be a corruption of *maqdūdah*, adopted in my translation.

5 The MS has *al-q.bāʾ*, which is obscure, and I follow Farrāj's suggestion of reading *al-fināʾ*.

6 Farrāj says in a note that the *saqqāʾ* (normally "watercarrier") is in fact a wine-pourer (*sāqī*) and the *qirbah* ("waterskin") a wineskin.

Carrying a sweet waterskin, wearing a mantle.
[388] Strutting in red velvet,
With a knob like a bald skull,
As if it were an ember from a blazing fire.[7]

Fine are his verses on Ibn al-Jahm:[8]

One day, Ibn al-Jahm's Generosity and his Valour quarrelled
and said, "We are happy for Glory to be judge!"
Generosity said, "Glory, I robbed him of his wealth,
but I gave him praise and reward in its stead!"
Then Valour said, "I have bared his swords, I took them
shining white to the waterhole, bringing them back red!"
Glory responded: "Both of you have raised a dome of lofty deeds
and he made it a home, so inhabit it with him forever!"

Fine are also these:[9]

If Ibn al-Jahm moved but one handbreadth
all the world would follow him.
I cannot see anybody gaining profit
except those who hope for his boons;
I do not see any place where one finds benefit
except his hand when a man goes to him.
If his gaze sent a glance to a rock,
water would burst forth from it.

Jaḥshawayh is one of the proficient well-known poets.

7 The MS has *mina l-jamāʾī/jumāʾī* ("from the body" or "from a protuberance on the body", wrongly vowelled as *mina l-jimāʾī* in the edition), perhaps meaning "visible under his clothes" as Farrāj suggests; but I have adopted his suggestion of emending it to *mina l-ḥamāʾī*.

8 Not found elsewhere. Ibn al-Jahm is probably not the poet ʿAlī ibn al-Jahm (§ 68); he could be Muḥammad ibn al-Jahm al-Barmakī who served as governor under al-Maʾmūn. The *Mukhtaṣar* has al-Faḍl ibn al-Jahm, but nobody with this name has been found.

9 Not found elsewhere.

104 Abū Ḥukaymah[1] [389]

He is Rāshid ibn Isḥāq. Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī al-Baṣrī told me: There was a wonderful affection between Ibn al-Zayyāt[2] and Abū Ḥukaymah and they were very intimate friends. When Ibn al-Zayyāt came back from Mecca, people began to visit him, to congratulate him. They asked him, "Where is Abū Ḥukaymah?", and at that moment a letter arrived with the following verses:[3]

Don't forget my bond with you and my affection:
  You should long for my face and for seeing me!
Though I may be absent, thinking often of me must not
  be absent; and don't neglect my presents:
Dates, bdellium gum,[4] toothpicks,
  a cut of leather[5] for my shoes, which is what I want.
And if you, beyond what I have mentioned, also give a turban,
  that will be what I hope for from you.

Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Malik wrote in reply:

You are so close to me that {185}
  it makes my eyes water with tears.
No, by the one who increased me and favoured me
  above my companions with his long companionship:
I shall not betray our bond, I shall not forget you
  the day I pray, nor your presents!

1 Rāshid ibn Isḥāq ibn Rāshid, known as Abū Ḥukaymah (one also finds the incorrect Ḥakīmah or Ḥalīmah) was secretary of ʿAbd Allāh ibn Ṭāhir. He has entries in Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, xi, 122–125; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xiv, 59–62; Ibn Shākir, *Fawāt*, ii, 15–19. His poetry has been collected by al-Najjār, *Shuʿarāʾ ʿAbbāsiyyūn mansiyyūn*, II, ii, 299–309, II, iv, 23–84, and by Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Aʿrajī (Abū Ḥukaymah, *Dīwān*). On him see GAS, ii, 577–578 and Papoutsakis, "The *Ayrīyāt* of Abū Ḥukayma". As mentioned above (p. 452) he was famous for descriptions of his sexual impotence, which may have been fictional. In his encyclopaedia of common phrases, *Thimār al-qulūb*, al-Thaʿālibī has an entry on *ayr Abī Ḥukaymah*, "Abū Ḥukaymah's prick" (225–227).

2 On Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Malik al-Zayyāt see above, p. 383.

3 In *Aghānī*, xxiii, 57–59, where the story is said to take place during the last years of al-Maʾmūn's reign, the vizier's response has fourteen verses. See also Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, xi, 122–125, Abū Ḥukaymah, *Dīwān*, 131–132.

4 *Muql*, also called "false myrrh", is used as a kind of incense or a medicine.

5 Farrāj refers to the dictionaries, where *filʿah* is glossed as "piece of a camel's hump"; he finds it unclear here. But as al-ʿAskarī in his *Talkhīṣ* (165) says, in a chapter on sandals or shoes, "every piece (*qiṭʿah*) is a *filʿah*".

[390] Abū Ḥukaymah is the poet who composed elegies on his tool such as no one had ever done, saying:[6]

Prick, wake up!
The gazelle fawn has taken off his loincloth![7]
How can I excuse myself for you
now that I lie so close to him?
[You have become like a drooping eyelash,[8]
that once was beautiful and fresh!
No visitor will enjoy your favour
when he visits.][9]
You with your heavy head, one who slumbers
all night and all day,
Making the skin of his testicles
a wrapper against the cold,
One who cannot be moved to be of any use
for anyone who tries to move it!
A sleeping prick means ignominy,
so beware of ignominy and shame!
Pretty girls rarely love
a gentle, sedate prick:
Rather, they shun it
when they know it is crestfallen,
And they agree to it only
when they praise it, having tested it.
Where is your former state,
full of energy and heat?
I have known a time when you
were erect like a minaret
And people thought you must be made
of iron or of stone!

He composed many poems in this vein, which are well-known among people.

6 Abū Ḥukaymah, *Dīwān*, 41–42 (a poem of 24 vss. of which Ibn al-Muʿtazz quotes vss. 1–2, 11–12, 4–10, 14–16). For an English translation of the complete poem see Papoutsakis, "The *Ayrīyāt* of Abū Ḥukayma", 111–112.

7 The poem uses masculine forms; the gender of the "fawn" is uncertain (Papoutsakis writes "[his/her?]"), but that it is female is suggested by the "pretty girls" below.

8 *Ka-l-hudbi l-mudallā*: alternatively, "like a dangling fringe (of a cloth)"; cf. Papoutsakis: "like a loosely-hanging hem".

9 The bracketed verses are from the *Mukhtaṣar* (ed. Farrāj, Appendix, 457).

105 Abū Naʿāmah al-Danqaʿī[1]

Isḥāq ibn Muḥammad al-Madīnī told me: Muḥammad ibn al-ʿAbbās al-Hāshimī said: I entered a hammam in ʿAmmār Gate[2] in the month of Muḥarram, and there I found Abū Naʿāmah in flagrante with the bath attendant. "Now what's that, Abū Naʿāmah!" I said. Then he recited these verses:[3]

You have seen Abū Naʿāmah not performing prayer; [391]
he does not know when it is time to prostrate oneself.
He never puts down his forehead except
when he stoops for a shaft to be inserted.

He also said:[4]

Gone is the time of sons of chaste women:
this is the time of whoresons.

As for the cause of Abū Naʿāmah's death, it happened when Mufliḥ[5] entered Baghdad, wanting to go to the ruler of Basra.[6] He was told that Abū Naʿāmah had leanings toward ʿAlī and his descendants, whereupon he struck Abū Naʿāmah with his sword, killing him. When ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad, the ruler of

1 Abū Naʿāmah was a Kufan poet of satirical poems. He has entries in al-Marzubānī, *Muʿjam*, 395–396 (where he is called Abū Naʿāmah Muḥammad, or Aḥmad, ibn al-Daqīqī al-Kūfī, his teknonym being Abū Jaʿfar) and in al-Qifṭī, *Muḥammadū*n, 437–438 (where the *nisbah* is al-Danfaʿī, said to unpunctuated in the MS). In the MS of *Ṭabaqāt* the poet's *nisbah* seems to be al-Dabīqī; in the *Mukhtaṣar* it is al-Danqaʿī. Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, i, 514 lists "al-Danqaʿī" as a poet who composed little (*muqill*). Farrāj opts for al-Danqaʿī, a *nisbah* not listed in al-Samʿānī's *Ansāb* and not traced to a known place name or tribe; some lexicons (e.g Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān*) record the very rare verb *danqaʿa*, "to be poor". See also *GAS*, ii, 537 (which has al-Daqīqī). The poet was killed in 260/874 according to al-Marzubānī. Abū l-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī says (*Aghānī*, xvi, 246) that he has seen a poem by Abū Naʿāmah in the handwriting of al-Jāḥiẓ, in a collection of Abū Naʿāmah's poetry (cf. above, in the entry on al-Raqāshī, p. 324 note 9).

2 Bāb ʿAmmār, on the east bank of the Tigris.

3 Not found elsewhere.

4 Not found elsewhere.

5 Mufliḥ, as al-Marzubānī, *Muʿjam*, 395 says, was a servant of Mūsā ibn Bughā (a Turkish military leader) who killed Abū Naʿāmah, whipping him to death for allegations of Shi'ite leanings. Mufliḥ was later killed when fighting the Zanj (al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, iii, 1865).

6 This ruler (*ṣāḥib*) of Basra, called ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad, was the leader of the large-scale and protracted rebellion of the Zanj in southern Iraq (255–270/868–883); he was killed in 270/883. He claimed to be a descendant of ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib, which is why he is called "the ʿAlid" (al-ʿAlawī) in this report.

Basra heard that, he said, "He has struck him for his love of ʿAlī and his family? I swear to God, this Mufliḥ ('Prosper') will never prosper any more!" Before the month was over the ʿAlid had killed him in Basra.

Admired among the poetry by Abū Naʿāmah is his piece on Abū l-Simṭ al-Aṣghar, viz., Marwān ibn Abī Ḥafṣah ibn Marwān ibn Abī Ḥafṣah, in which he says:[7]

{186}

We found that it had become intensely cold,
so we asked about what could be the cause.
They said, "Someone is reciting
the poetry of Ibn Abī Ḥafṣah,[8]
A man so fond of being buggered
that the throat of his arse is choked."

7 On Abū l-Simṭ al-Aṣghar see the next entry, § 106, Abū l-Simṭ Marwān ibn Abī l-Janūb. The verses are attributed to Khālid ibn Yazīd (on whom see below, § 115) improvising at the request of Caliph al-Mutawakkil, in *Aghānī*, xxiii, 109–210 and al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xxv, 454; and to al-Jammāz in al-Nashshābī, *Mudhākarah*, 82–83. The Caliph is said to have laughed and stamped the floor with amusement.

8 Arabic *bārid*, "cold", also means "insipid, inane, dull", compare the anecdote below, p. 602. Al-Ṣūlī reports (*Awrāq*, iii, 116–117) that Ibn al-Muʿtazz called the poetry of Marwān Senior "hot", that of his descendants gradually "cooler", and Marwān al-Aṣghar's poetry "extremely cold (or insipid)".

106 Ibn Abī Ḥafṣah al-Aṣghar ("the Younger"), Marwān[1]

Al-Diʿbilī told us:[2] ʿAlī ibn al-Jahm used to compete with Marwān ibn Abī Ḥafṣah the Younger, viz., Abū l-Simṭ, attacking and lampooning him. People got involved in their affair. ‖ Some said, ʿAlī is the better poet, but most said, Marwān is better. Then Marwān composed the following two verses:[3] [392]

Upon your life, Jahm ibn Badr is no poet,
yet this son of his, ʿAlī, claims he composes poetry.
But my father was his mother's neighbour,
and when he transmitted[4] poetry it made me imagine something.

ʿAlī ibn al-Jahm responded with these verses:[5]

A trial like no other tribulation:
the hostility of someone without rank or religion!
He allows you to impugn a repute that he does not guard,
while he slanders your well-guarded repute.

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1 Abū l-Simṭ Marwān ibn Abī l-Janūb Yaḥyā ibn Marwān ibn Abī Ḥafṣah (d. after 240/854), the grandson of Marwān ibn Abī Ḥafṣah (above, § 5) and therefore sometimes called Marwān al-Aṣghar ("Junior"). He composed panegyrics on the caliphs al-Maʾmūn, al-Muʿtaṣim, and al-Mutawakkil. He has entries in Ibn al-Jarrāḥ, *Waraqah*, 47–49 (together with his grandfather); two entries in *Aghānī*, xii, 79–87 and xxiii, 205–215; al-Marzubānī, *Muʿjam*, 321–322; idem, *Muwashshaḥ*, 462–464; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, xv, 197–198; al-Nashshābī, *Mudhākarah*, 82–84; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xxv, 452–456; and see GAS, ii, 582–583, EI2, vi, 625–626 (J.E. Bencheikh, an entry together with his grandfather); EAL, 511–512 (G.J.H. van Gelder).

2 Al-Diʿbilī is al-Ḥusayn, son of Diʿbil (§ 45), who has an entry below (§ 117). On ʿAlī ibn al-Jahm see above, § 68.

3 For these and the following verses see *Aghānī*, xii, 83; al-Ḥuṣrī, *Jamʿ*, 119–120; Ibn Ẓāfir, *Badāʾiʿ*, 293; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, iii, 357; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xxv, 456. Marwān's verses also in al-Rāghib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, i, 221–222; al-Jurjānī, *Nihāyah*, 57 (where "Abū l-Ṣalt" is an error for Abū l-Simṭ); Ibn Rashīq, *ʿUmdah*, i, 79.

4 Instead of *rawā* the other versions have *-ddaʿā*, "claimed (to compose)" or *taʿāṭā*, "was engaged (in composing)". Ibn Khallikān suggests that Marwān's insinuation may have been inspired by an anecdote about Kuthayyir ʿAzzah who heard al-Farazdaq reciting some verses and asked him, "Did your mother use to come to Basra?" Al -Farazdaq replied, "No, but my father often visited it." See *Aghānī*, ix, 341, 342; but the motif is old and widespread (see references in Marzolph, *Arabia ridens*, ii, 80).

5 In addition to the sources mentioned above, these verses are quoted anonymously in Ibn Qutaybah, *ʿUyūn*, iii, 114; Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, i, 213, ii, 339; al-Tawḥīdī, *Ṣadāqah*, 107; and see ʿAlī ibn al-Jahm, *Dīwān*, 187.

Then all people judged that Marwān was the better poet, and that what ʿAlī had said was not a proper rejoinder, but rather a lame admission of defeat.

[As for Yaḥyā ibn Abī l-Simṭ, he was called praiseworthy by al-Mutawakkil. Yaḥyā is the one who composed these verses on al-Mutawakkil:[6]

Those gazelles, gazelles whose concern are children's necklaces,[7]
they graze on hearts—and in my heart there is herbage for them.
They are gazelles that have no horns
and their ornaments are pearls, rubies, and gold.]

Fine verses by him are these:[8]

Youth is the road to grey hair and old age,
and the newness of hair will last for no living being.
The sun of youth rises over me today,
but it will set. Time is change.
I am twenty years, no more, no less;
I am twenty but in danger of turning grey.
Though the cheerfulness of youth will end,
we do not mind when we shall go to our grave.
We have livers that are split with yearning
and eyes black-rimmed with tears and sleeplessness.
Rain and grazing pastures to those who departed carried on camels,
with untouched virgins like gazelles and oryxes!
Evening and morning my heart thinks of them,
as if between the fangs of a male serpent.
I said farewell to them and it increased my grief;
it had been merely like a wary bird's drink at the waterhole.
[393] Many a desert, to which God seems to have said:
"When riders' mounts cross you, spread wider!",[9]

6 This bracketed passage is taken from the *Mukhtaṣar* (ed. Farrāj, Appendix, 458). Yaḥyā ibn Abī l-Simṭ has not been found elsewhere. The verses (clearly not "on al-Mutawakkil" but perhaps from the introduction of a panegyric on him) are ascribed to Mānī l-Muwaswis in Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, vi, 169 (followed by four more verses; see his *Dīwān*, 45); they are quoted anonymously as a song text, sung by Isḥāq ibn Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī to Caliph al-Wāthiq, in *Aghānī*, v, 355, 389.

7 *Sukhub*, sg. *sikhāb*, "necklace without jewels, made of beads, cloves, etc." (which the next verse seems to contradict).

8 Not found elsewhere; it is clearly only the introduction of a longer poem.

9 This verse is quoted in al-Rāghib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ii, 358 (with the less likely *riqāb*, "necks", instead

10 In which a black-eyed ewe walks safely,
like a virgin, flirtatiously yet bashfully, …[10]

This Abū l-Simṭ was fervently anti-Shi'ite. And if this is true, may God curse him![11]

of *rikāb*, "mounts, camels") attributed to Dīk al-Jinn, and anonymously in al-Zamakhsharī, *Rabīʿ*, i, 206.

10 The sentence beginning with vs. 9 is left incomplete and one would have expected, after a descriptive passage, a continuation such as "… have I crossed …"

11 The poet is called a *nāṣibī*, hostile to ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib and the ʿAlids, to the point of not recognising him as the fourth caliph. Eghbal and Farrāj are likely to be right in thinking that the last sentence is added by a Shi'ite copyist.

107 al-Buḥturī[1]

He is al-Walīd ibn ʿUbayd and his teknonym is Abū ʿUbādah. ʿAllān ibn Muḥammad told me: Al-Buḥturī lampooned Abū l-Faḍl ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Sahl, who let the matter rest for some days and made it appear that he did not care, ignoring the lampoon.[2] He did not show that he was upset by it. One day, when the poet was with him, he said, "Abū ʿUbādah, will you sell to me your servant Nasīm?" Al-Buḥturī said, "How could I sell him to you, since the moment I part with him my soul would part with me?" Ibrāhīm said, "I'll give you a handsome sum!" "How much will you give me?" "I'll give you one thousand dinars."
{187} "I won't do it." "I'll give you two thousand dinars!" ‖ "Show me the money!" And then he sold the servant, who was taken away by Abū l-Faḍl. But a day had not passed before al-Buḥturī was distraught and regretted the sale. A whole day from morning till evening he spent at Abū l-Faḍl's door, asking him to rescind the sale, but that was refused. Having lost patience, he wrote to him:[3]

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1 From this short entry alone one would not guess that al-Buḥturī, together with Abū Tammām (§ 51) and the strikingly absent Ibn al-Rūmī, is one of the three outstanding poets of the mid- and late 3rd/9th century. Abū ʿUbādah al-Walīd ibn ʿUbayd (or ʿUbayd Allāh) al-Buḥturī (of a branch of the tribe of Ṭayyiʾ) grew up in Syria, followed in the footsteps of Abū Tammām in becoming a panegyrist in Baghdad and elsewhere. He died in 284/897. Like Abū Tammām he compiled an anthology of poems by mainly early poets, also called *al-Ḥamāsah*, but it did not become as popular as Abū Tammām's *Ḥamāsah*. His *Dīwān* was redacted by several early philologists; there is a modern five-volume edition by Ḥasan Kāmil al-Ṣayrafī. See on him e.g. al-Ṣūlī, *Akhbār al-Buḥturī* and al-Āmidī, *Muwāzanah* (a large-scale, multi-volume comparison of Abū Tammām and al-Buḥturī). His "natural" style is often contrasted with the more mannered, "artificial" style of Abū Tammām. He has entries in *Aghānī*, xxi, 36–53; Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, i, 529; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, xv, 620–625; Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh*, lxiii, 188–205; Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, xix, 248–258; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, vi, 21–31; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xxvii, 465–472; Ibn Faḍl Allāh, *Masālik* (ed. al-Jubūrī), xiv, 471–540. See *GAS*, ii, 560–564, ix, 300–301; *EI2*, i, 1289–1290 (Ch. Pellat); *EAL*, 161–162 (J.S. Meisami); Cooperson & Toorawa (eds), *Arabic Literary Culture*, 98–107 (Samer Mahdy Ali). For al-Buḥturī's praise poems on Ibn al-Muʿtazz see *Dīwān*, 119 (partly translated in the Introduction, above, p. 13), 2367–2368; for another on his father the Caliph al-Muʿtazz together with the son, see *Dīwān*, 614–616.

2 Abū l-Faḍl Ibrāhīm ibn al-Ḥasan ibn Sahl (the son of al-Maʾmūn's secretary, governor, and father-in-law al-Ḥasan ibn Sahl) was chamberlain (*ḥājib*) of al-Mutawakkil; al-Buḥturī composed several panegyrics on him, some mixed with reproach. The poet is said on his deathbed to have asked his son to destroy all his *hijāʾ*, and although many lampoons are preserved despite this request, no such poem on Abū l-Faḍl Ibrāhīm is known.

3 They are vss. 12–15 of a poem of 15 verses in the *Dīwān*, 527–530. On the story, see also al-Ṣūlī, *Akhbār al-Buḥturī*, 127–128, al-Anṭākī, *Tazyīn*, ii, 91, and *Aghānī*, xxi, 45, where it is said that al-Buḥturī made a habit of selling the servant (a Byzantine, *Rūmī*) to decent, literate people,

Abū l-Faḍl, ninety-nine ewes should be enough
for you; there is only a single gazelle in my courtyard![4]
Must you take him from me, now that love of him
has taken my heart, in what I hide and what I reveal?
My fondness and my fervent love for him go out to him, [394]
my passion does not leave him, my effort for him does not tire.
You said, "Get over him!"—I would rather die.
How could Ibn al-Mufarrigh get over Burd?

Ibn al-Mufarrigh is a poet who had a servant called Burd; he sold him but regretted it and he composed many poems on him.[5]—Then Abū l-Faḍl said to him, "I'll sell him to you for everything you possess." Al-Buḥturī said, "Agreed!" So the boy was sold to him for all he possessed; the sale was witnessed and the boy returned to him. But the following day the bill of sale was returned to him and the whole was rescinded. Abū l-Faḍl sent him a gift and said to him, "Take care and do not lampoon noble people, for they have stratagems to make your lampooning or praising go astray."

[Ibrāhīm ibn ʿUmar told me:[6] Al-Buḥturī's agent wrote from Manbij[7] informing him that the official revenue collector had unjustly demanded land tax from him, that he had unpleasantly confronted him about the fief that the authorities had granted the poet, and that he had entered him in the register together with the local inhabitants for levying taxes. Al-Buḥturī, who had large estates in Manbij yielding copious returns, was beside himself. He went to the Department of ʿUbayd Allāh,[8] where all officials and state secretaries were gathered, and complained about what his agent had written about. One of the officials said to him, "You must spend some money, and then we'll write to the revenue collector there, to register your estates as they were before." Then al-Buḥturī said,[9]

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who would later generously return the boy, moved by the poet's love poems on him and by panegyrics on the new master. For poems about Nasīm see also *Dīwān*, 1513, 1994–1995, 2074–2075.

4 A reference to Q Ṣād 38:23 (Dāwūd/David is addressed by a disputant): *This brother of mine has ninety-nine ewes and I have one ewe!*

5 On Yazīd ibn Ziyād ibn al-Mufarrigh (d. 69/688), see GAS, ii, 324–326. On the story of Ibn al-Mufarrigh and Burd see Ibn Qutaybah, *Shiʿr*, 361–362, *Aghānī*, xviii, 258, 261, 273.

6 Instead of the preceding part of the entry on al-Buḥturī, the *Mukhtaṣar* only has this bracketed passage (ed. Farrāj, Appendix, 458). For another English translation, including the verses, see Gruendler, "Verse and Taxes", 111–112 (on the episode see also 99–100).

7 Manbij, al-Buḥturī's birthplace, is a town north-east of Aleppo.

8 On ʿUbayd Allāh ibn Yaḥyā ibn Khāqān see below, p. 608.

9 Al-Buḥturī, *Dīwān*, (i,) 493–494 (9 vss., of which Ibn al-Muʿtazz quotes vss. 1–2, 7–8, 3, 5–6).

Must gifts from caliphs be returned,
whose praise I, alone, undertook to spread?
Only what I said about them was carried afar;
if they gave to other people, they gave more.
What have I to do with the levying of taxes, when you register me,
though most other people are registered before or after me?
But my way is to be given what you ask from me,
and the rule for me is to be given boons, not to give them!
If the tax exemption is taken away harshly,
and the granting of a fief has gone full circle to be returned,
Then return to me the verses that have widely spread,
with the glorious deeds mentioned in them,
And the bloom of youth, once new, that I have now worn out
for you, like a man who has worn his coat to rags!]

The editor of the *Dīwān* refers to other poems by al-Buḥturī linked with the episode, which he dates at 256/869–870. On the matter see also al-Ṣūlī, *Akhbār al-Buḥturī*, 108–110. As Gruendler writes ("Verse and Taxes", 100), "Ibn al-Muʿtazz gives al-Buḥturī the last word and the moral victory, while al-Ṣūlī's more balanced account shows the poet's protracted struggle with the authorities."

108 al-ʿAṭawī Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān[1]

Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥubāb al-Baṣrī told me: Al-ʿAṭawī held the beliefs of al-Ḥusayn al-Najjār.[2] Al-Iskāfī used to say,[3] "Al-ʿAṭawī was one of the prominent theologians; [his proper name was Muḥammad ibn Abī ʿAṭiyyah].[4] If he was present at a discussion he would dominate the assembly with his brilliance and eloquence."

We have chosen to quote these verses by him:[5]

> Lovers do not put on or take off a robe of passion
> except the robes that I wear out;
> They only drink a sweet or bitter glass of love
> of what I have left for them to drink.

Al-ʿAṭawī also said,[6]

> You, amassing abundant knowledge:
> Advance to misery, forward, forward!

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1 Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Abī ʿAṭiyyah (d. after 240/854), a *mawlā* from Basra, poet, state secretary (*kātib*) and theologian, known as al-ʿAṭawī (*nisbah* of ʿAṭiyyah). Ibn al-Nadīm lists him among the poets (*Fihrist*, i, 535) but also, in a fuller entry, among the Mujbirah (theologians said to believe in *jabr*, "compulsion", denying free-will) and as the author of treatises (i, 646); see also van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft*, iv, 165–168. He has entries in *Aghānī*, xxiii, 122–128; al-Marzubānī, *Muʿjam*, 377; al-Samʿānī, *Ansāb*, iii, 210–211; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, iv, 231–232 (where he is found as Muḥammad ibn ʿAṭiyyah al-ʿAṭawī); al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, iii, 225–226; Ibn Faḍl Allāh, *Masālik* (ed. al-Jubūrī), xiv, 598–600. See GAS, ii, 518, ix, 295.

2 On the Murjiʾī/Jabrī theologian al-Ḥusayn ibn Muḥammad al-Najjār (a contemporary of al-Maʾmūn, dates unknown), see EI2, vii, 866–868, "al-Nadjdjār" (H.S. Nyberg & Khalil ʿAthāmina), van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft*, iv, 147–160.

3 On the Muʿtazilite theologian Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-Iskāfī (d. 240/854), see EI2, iv, 126–127, "al-Iskāfī, Abū Djaʿfar", van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft*, iv, 77–87.

4 The parenthesis is from the *Mukhtaṣar* (ed. Farrāj, Appendix, 459).

5 Quoted, preceded by another verse, in al-Qālī, *Amālī*, i, 29, as recited by ʿIshriqah al-Muḥāribiyyah; a fourth verse is added in Abū ʿUbayd al-Bakrī, *Simṭ al-laʾālī*, i, 131. Anonymously in Usāmah, *Badīʿ*, 132; attributed to Abū Nuwās in Ibn Manẓūr, *Akhbār Abī Nuwās*, ii, 79, see Wagner, *Abū Nuwās in der Nebenüberlieferung*, 165; attributed to "a certain secretary" in al-Washshāʾ, *Muwashshā*, 186, said to be written on a cup. For another English translation see al-Udhari, *Classical Poems by Arab Women*, 50, attributing the verses to "Ishraqa [*sic*] al-Muharibiyya", even though she is probably the transmitter, not the poet.

6 The verses, in *rajaz* metre, are not found elsewhere. Vss. 3–4 are lacking in Farrāj's edition (not in that of al-Ṭabbāʿ): *fa-wa-lladhī ajzala minhu l-qasmā | la-ajhadanna an yakūna khaṣmā*.

You have been deprived of riches, endowed with understanding.
Now, by Him who allots plenty,
I shall strive to make him an opponent.

He continued:[7] He was a friend of ʿAlī ibn al-Qāsim ibn al-Ḥusayn.[8] When a boy
[395] was born to the latter, ‖ al-ʿAṭawī sent this poem to him:[9]

ʿAlī, son of the Intercessor who must be obeyed!
Son of the Lamps, son of blazing lights!
Son of the Shariah, son of the Scripture,
son of Transmission and son of Tradition!
Son of the ritual holy sites, son of the Standing Place,
of Zamzam, the Cornerstone, the Stone,[10]
Affiliations that are not unknown
among the Bedouins in the land or the settled people,
On all sides cleansed
from all blemish or impurity!
I came to you rejoicing in good tidings,
in the good news from you, when I heard about it.
The bringer of good tidings came to me
—and so often bad or joyful news from people reaches me—
He came to me, mentioning that you had been blessed
with a boy, and I was elated by the report,
And because you, acting rightly guided,
gave him the name of the best of mankind.
{188} May God give you long life, that you may see him
advancing to old age,[11]
That you may see him surrounded by his sons
and his brothers, in droves,

7 "He" is probably the aforementioned Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad.

8 Not identified; he was apparently an ʿAlid ("son", i.e., descendant, of the "Intercessor", al-Shafiʿ, in vs. 1, the Prophet Muḥammad).

9 Of the following poem, vss. 6–7, 9–14 are quoted in Ibn Qutaybah, *ʿUyūn*, iii, 98, attributed to Abū ʿAlī al-Ḍarīr ("the Blind"), on whom see below, § 110. I follow Farrāj's several emendations of the text.

10 These are all places near the Kaaba: the Standing Place (*Maqām*) of Ibrāhīm/Abraham, the sacred well of Zamzam, and the cornerstone of the Kaaba containing the Black Stone.

11 *Kibar* may also means "greatness" and perhaps both senses are intended.

And that he may aim for great things,
his benevolence hoped for, his malevolence feared.[12]
May God instil into you gratefulness for this gift,
for there is increase for a servant of God who gives thanks;
And may He bless the pious ancestors
among yours and bless those who lived in bygone times!

12 "Malevolence", of course, towards enemies; it is a common topos in panegyric.

[396] 109 Ibn Abī Fanan[1]

ʿAbd Allāh ibn Ṣāliḥ the Qur'an reciter told me:[2] Ibn Abī Fanan, whose name was Abū ʿAbd Allāh Aḥmad, was a proficient, naturally gifted poet. He owned an estate in a fief of Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Ṭāhir.[3] He was often visited by the tax collector, which annoyed and disturbed him. So he wrote to Muḥammad, mentioning this:

Sons of Ḥusayn! The Emir
  has taken me under his wing,
And we have a living in his fief,
  lying on wholesome water.
There I built a house
  which I called House of Joy.
When I sit in its courtyard
  and drink the milk of pressed grapes,[4]
It is as if I were, in my bliss,
  "the lord of al-Khawarnaq and al-Sadīr",[5]
Were it not for that tax collector, frequenting me
  like a dog on a rainy day,
Coming to me in the morning and in the evening,
  joining an evening visit with an early morning one.
When his face shows up to me
  I am ignominiously expelled from my joy;
So will the Emir, with his goodness,
  protect me from his ugly mug?

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1 Abū ʿAbd Allāh Aḥmad ibn Abī Fanan Ṣāliḥ (d. between 260/874 and 270/883), *mawlā* of the Banū Hāshim (the Abbasids), a state secretary and poet, was one of Ibn al-Muʿtazz's teachers (al-Ṣūlī, *Awrāq*, iii, 107). He has entries in al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, v, 330–331; Ibn Shākir, *Fawāt*, i, 70; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, vi, 423.; and see GAS, ii, 585.

2 For another translation of this entry, see Gruendler, "Verse and Taxes"; the same, with slight differences, also in al-Shābushtī, *Diyārāt* (ed. ʿAwwād), 125–126, (ed. & tr. Kilpatrick, with a rhymed translation of the poem), 162–165.

3 Muḥammad (d. 253/867), son of ʿAbd Allāh ibn Ṭāhir ibn al-Ḥusayn (on whom see above, pp. 268–273), governor of Baghdad under al-Mutawakkil, patron of poets and a poet himself (al-Marzubānī, *Muʿjam*, 383–384; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, iii, 304–305; GAS, ii, 611).

4 A common euphemism for wine.

5 A quotation from a famous poem by the pre-Islamic al-Munakhkhal al-Yashkurī (*al-Aṣmaʿiyyāt*, 60): "When I am intoxicated, I am | the lord of al-Khawarnaq and al-Sadīr"; see above, p. 124.

When Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh read these verses, he wrote beneath them: "We shall protect you, Abū ʿAbd Allāh, and we have given orders for your land tax to be taken upon ourselves." This amounted to six thousand dirhams per annum. He also sent him a gift and swore an oath that he would pay the tax for him. He swore this oath only because Ibn Abī Fanan was a man who would not praise anyone begging for gifts and would not put himself in a position to accept charity from anybody. Abū ʿAbd Allāh said, ‖ "When the edict reached [397]
me together with the gift, and knowing that he had sworn a solemn oath that I should accept, I found it impossible to refuse. So I will thank him for what he did with poetry. I must compose a poem of praise on him each year. That is how I became a poet."

110 Abū ʿAlī al-Baṣīr[1]

Ibn Diʿāmah told me: Abū ʿAlī was standing at the al-Jawsaq Gate[2] when the processions were coming past. He asked about the personages in them, and he was told, "That one is So-and-so the Turk; that one is So-and-so the Khazarī; that one is So-and-so the Farghānī; that one is So-and-so the Daylamī." But not a single prominent Arab was mentioned to him, neither from the descendants of the Emigrants nor from those of the Supporters.[3] He said, "Sons of blessing,[4] put up with them, just as they put up with you!"

Abū ʿAlī was an epistolographer[5] who was unique in his time, as well as a good poet. As we said in the section on al-ʿAttābī,[6] this is rarely combined in one person, for the poetry of prose writers is very feeble, just as the prose writing {189} ‖ of poets is very feeble. If one person is proficient in both arts he is without peer.[7] Abū ʿAlī said:[8]

1 Al-Faḍl ibn Jaʿfar al-Anbārī (d. after 252/866), known as Abū ʿAlī al-Baṣīr ("the clear-sighted", a common euphemism by antiphrasis for "blind"), and sometimes as Abū ʿAlī al-Ḍarīr ("the blind"), poet and *kātib* of Persian descent from Kufa, active in Baghdad and Samarra; panegyrist of caliphs and others. He has entries in al-Marzubānī, *Muʿjam*, 185; Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, i, 382 (listed under the *kuttāb* and writers of epistles) and i, 536 (as a poet); al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xxiv, 32–34; idem, *Nakt*, 225–226; Ibn Faḍl Allāh, *Masālik* (ed. al-Jubūrī), xiv, 463. See GAS, ii, 536, ix, 298, xvi, 427; EI2, i, 1082 (J.W. Fück); EAL, 25 (G.J.H. van Gelder). His verse has been collected by Yūnus Aḥmad al-Sāmarrāʾī (Abū ʿAlī al-Baṣīr, *Dīwān*); a few of his letters have been preserved, see Ṣafwat (ed.), *Jamharat rasāʾil al-ʿArab*, iv, 139–150.

2 Bāb al-Jawsaq (from Persian *kūshk*, "palace" or "villa", via Turkish ending up in English as "kiosk") may refer to eight locations according to Yāqūt, *Mushtarak*, 112–113, including a place in Baghdad. There was also one in Samarra (not listed by Yāqūt but see Ibn al-ʿImrānī, *Inbāʾ*, 131), which could be meant here, since Abū ʿAlī is said to have moved there when it was built in 221/836. On the palace called al-Jawsaq built for al-Muʿtaṣim in Samarra see Northedge, "The Palaces", 34–36.

3 The military, including their commanders, consisted mostly of people of Turkic descent (among them the Khazars, in the Caucasus area and north of it), or Persian/Iranian descent (among them people from Farghānah, in modern Uzbekistan, and Daylam, in modern Iran south of the Caspian Sea). The move of the caliphal residence from Baghdad to Samarra was inspired by the frictions between the military and civilians. The Emigrants (*al-Muhājirūn*) were those early Muslims who migrated with the Prophet from Mecca to Yathrib (Medina); the Supporters (*al-Anṣār*) were the Medinans who joined Muḥammad.

4 *Banū l-niʿmah* usually means "well-to-do people", but here it must refer to those of Arab descent.

5 *Kātiban risāliyyan*: the word *kātib* (pl. *kuttāb*) is ambiguous and the adjective is added apparently to make it clear that he was not a "(state) secretary" but an able writer of prose.

6 See above, p. 379 in § 44.

7 Ibn Rashīq, *ʿUmdah*, ii, 106–113, in a chapter on the poetry of *kuttāb*, is far more positive. One will remember that Ibn al-Muʿtazz himself was famous for his poetry and his prose sayings and epistles.

8 Abū ʿAlī al-Baṣīr, *Dīwān*, 31–32; not found elsewhere.

The scouts of passion[9] have robbed me of my heart;
happiness has been replaced by grief.
They took possession of my gaze and my heart became
the bridle in the grasping hand of a fawn.[10]
Then the hand turned the rein to him, obediently,
and the hand of passion extended from him, to fasten the bond.
A slim boy, with thick eyebrows, handsome, inexperienced,
mingling for me his languidness with confusion,
Not prone to be together nor to abandon me, but [398]
now shrinking back, then relaxing.
Sometimes I say, "Being with him cannot be prevented
by his dislike!" and my spirits revive.
Thus I am forever in hope or despair
about my beloved, between his favour and his anger.
Passion for him has clothed me with a robe of sickness,
a thin robe that has made me thin.

His letters and his poems are many and widely known.

9 Although *rāʾidātu l-hawā* seems to refer to women it seems that the phrase must be taken figuratively, love as scouting or seeking out the poet.

10 *Fa-ṣāra fuʾādī | gharḍa kaffin li-shādinin qabbāṭī*. The dictionaries explain *gharḍ* or *ghurḍ* as "saddle-girth"; I made it "bridle" to go better with the following verse. But I find the imagery of the whole passage somewhat puzzling.

111 ʿIṣābah al-Jarjarāʾī[1]

Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Ismāʿīl al-Kūfī told me:[2] ʿIṣābah al-Jarjarāʾī's name is Ismāʿīl ibn Muḥammad, his teknonym is Abū Isḥāq, and his nickname is ʿIṣābah. Muḥammad ibn Manṣūr told me: ʿIṣābah al-Jarjarāʾī said to me: "Al-Ḥasan ibn Rajāʾ[3] sent his chamberlain to me, who told me, 'Go to the Emir, to be his drinking companion.' I asked him to excuse myself from this. I suggested he should find something to say and I promised him something; but he would not comply. So I went along, riding with him. He took me to a private chamber and brought me some food, which I ate. Then he took me inside to al-Ḥasan ibn Rajāʾ. I stood at some distance, but he told me to come nearer, making me sit before him. 'Today', he said to me, 'is a day of joy and happiness, so help me
[399] with this! Relax, do not feel inhibited!' Then ‖ he said, 'Boy, pour me a pint!' The servant did so. Then he said, 'Pour some for Abū Isḥāq!' The boy poured me a pint, which curdled my body from crown to sandal. Then we conversed. 'Recite to me', he said, 'five hundred verses of your own poetry and by others!' When I had recited approximately that amount he said, 'You have a good memory and your poetry is good.' I went on to recite some more, while the date wine[4] was having its effect on me. Finally he said, 'Boy, pour me and ʿIṣābah another pint!' The servant brought a pint, pouring half in the Emir's cup and the other half in mine. I looked closely at the servant and then suddenly the Emir's eyes were going round in their sockets like two pulleys.[5] He was gesturing as if to say, 'Take

1 ʿIṣābah al-Jarjarāʾī (consistently misspelled "al-Jurjānī" in the MS) Abū Isḥāq Ismāʿīl ibn Muḥammad is not often mentioned in reference works and not listed in Ibn al-Nadīm's *Fihrist* or Sezgin's *GAS*. His *nisbah* is derived from Jarjarāyā, a town on the Tigris between Baghdad and Wāsiṭ, see Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-buldān* s.v., where he is called ʿIṣābah al-Jarjarāʾī Ibrāhīm ibn Bādhām. His nickname (*laqab*) ʿIṣābah means "headband" or "turban". He has an entry in al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, ix, 207–208, where he is called Ismāʿīl ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥātim al-Bādhāmī Abū Isḥāq ʿIṣābah al-Jarjarāʾī, and where it is said that he was a Shi'ite who lampooned the Abbasids and others and praised some others. Al-Ṣafadī calls his poetry "overworked" (*mutaʿassif*) and his style "to be rejected, of laboured thought" (*al-namaṭ al-mardūd wa-l-khāṭir al-makdūd*).

2 The MS and the editions have "And his name is Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Ismāʿīl al-Kūfī; and others say:" but I have followed Farrāj's suggested emendation.

3 On him see above, p. 409. His *nisbah* is also al-Jarjarāʾī. As the following makes clear, the story occurred in Shiraz, in Fārs (southern Iran), which is where al-Ḥasan ibn Rajāʾ died in 242/856–857 as governor. On the story see Gruendler, "Meeting the Patron", 67–68.

4 Strictly, *nabīdh* is wine from dates or any fruit, but not from grapes. Sometimes (as in modern Arabic) it is a euphemism for *khamr*, grape wine.

5 Gruendler ("Meeting the Patron", 67) thinks that ʿIṣābah "became the unwilling accomplice of a failed plot to murder his patron". The Arabic has "his eyes", which is ambiguous; I have taken

his head!'. I jumped up and said, 'Please, Emir, I do not mean to do any harm, so forgive me, may God forgive you!' I bent down on the carpet, kissing it and imploring him. Then the Emir said to me, 'I forgive you, on condition that you will not remain in Fārs!' 'May God make the Emir prosper!' I said, 'Not even in towns in the vicinity?' But he replied, 'Save yourself!' So I left, senseless with shock and fear. I departed immediately with my family and my dependents. When I was at a distance of some seven miles from Shiraz I noticed a horseman was galloping behind me, holding something in his hand. When he had overtaken me he said, 'The Emir says: Here are ten thousand dirhams; spend them on your expenses!' I called for a piece of paper and an inkwell, and I wrote to him:[6]

They dye the tips of strong ash-wood spears {190}
only with clots of dark red spilled blood.
They march with the banners above their heads
like bone-breaking eagles,
While the horses brave the lances with their breasts,
as if they were pulling at ropes.
Bring greetings to the Emir and say to him,
'Drinking wine is a second breastfeeding;[7]
Being made your drinking-companion
has raised my rein above every rein.[8]
You broke me, but you rebuilt me [400]
with your own hands in the best possible way,
And you must straighten me whenever
I fall down, for you have been the builder!'"

ʿIṣābah continued: "I gave these verses to the messenger who had brought the money. He went off and I continued on my way. When I had covered some

them to be the Emir's, following (with thanks) Abeer al-Abbasi's plausible interpretation (personal communication): the Emir suspects the poet of having sexual ambitions towards the servant.

6 Vss. 1, 4 with two other vss. are in al-Ḥuṣrī, *Zahr*, 596, where it is said that the poet (here called ʿIṣābah al-Jurjānī) "had been reproved [by al-Ḥasan] about some matter, after which he lampooned him viciously and fled to Oman. Then he apologised a with a poem, beginning (…)." Six verses from a lampoon by ʿIṣābah on al-Ḥasan ibn Rajāʾ are quoted in al-Ṣūlī, *Adab al-kuttāb*, 60.

7 This verse is quoted in Kushājim, *Adab al-nadīm*, 29 and al-Thaʿālibī, *Thimār*, 619; vs. 4–5 are quoted anonymously in al-Khwārazmī, *Rasāʾil*, 165.

8 Farrāj thinks one could read either *ʿanān*, "cloud", or *ʿinān* "rein, bridle". I read *ʿinān*; ʿIṣābah's

thirty-five miles, I saw a group of people who were pacing at speed behind me. When they reached me, they said, 'Hey man, you've killed us and killed our mounts!' One of them handed me a letter, and I found it to be the one I had written, with the verses; and underneath were written these two verses:[9]

Tell Abū Isḥāq that the place where he is staying
is for me where my head and eyes are.
Let the fear that frightened him be lifted:
where he stays is a place of complete safety.

I said to the horsemen, 'You have ridden at speed and taken great pains. Dismount and stay here tonight so that you and your animals can rest.' They replied, 'We swear to God, even if you cut us off we could not do that, unless you return an answer or are brought back yourself together with us!' I said, 'Then send a rider in advance of you, to let him know that I shall be with him tomorrow.' 'That is all right', they said. They dispatched a rider to him who went at a gallop all night until he arrived at the Emir and informed him that they had caught up with me at such-and-such a place and that they would be with him the following day. The Emir was pleased. The next day we travelled, after our animals had rested. We arrived at his door and asked permission to enter, which was given. When we stood before him and I greeted him, he returned the greeting, stretching both hands toward me for me to take, and he embraced me.
[401] He made me sit ‖ with him, and I was his drinking companion that day until evening. It was evident that he was not a little pleased with my return. When I wanted to leave he gave orders that I be given one thousand dinars; he provided me with a riding animal and a robe of honour. After that I always had a most honoured and special place with him."

verse is a near-quotation of al-Farazdaq's verse: … *rafaʿū ʿinānī fawqa kulli ʿinānī*, in Abū ʿUbaydah, *Naqāʾiḍ Jarīr wa-l-Farazdaq*, 880, al-Qurashī, *Jamharah*, 101.

9 Al-Ḥuṣrī, *Zahr*, 596, with an intervening verse.

112 Abū Salhab[1]

Abū l-Ḥasan ʿAlī ibn Aḥmad al-Qummī told me: A certain merchant arrived in Basra[2] and went to Abū Ḥātim al-Sijistānī, who asked him, "Where are you from?" "I am from Fārs", he answered. Abū Ḥātim asked, "How is that poet of yours, one of whom people would say if he lived in Basra, 'There's no poet there apart from him'?" The man said, "May God make you prosper! Who do you mean?" "The one called Abū Salhab." "With us he does not have such standing!" Abū Ḥātim replied, "Upon my life! Is that the extent of their knowledge?! I swear to God, they have recited to me poems such I have never heard from any of his contemporaries. If you come across him, give him my regards and say to him, 'Would you like to come down to us, so that I can send you back to your country with one thousand dinars?'" The man said, "I'll do that." The merchant said, ‖ "When I arrived, I went to him and told him about the matter. Not long {191}
after, Abū Salhab visited Abū Ḥātim, and he returned to us after a while, having gained double of what had been promised. He used to tell about the generosity of Abū Ḥātim and his wide knowledge, and how nobly he had behaved to him, giving that money. He remained befriended with him and they corresponded with each other until Abū Ḥātim al-Sijistānī died."

Among the poetry by Abū Salhab that we have memorised are his verses lampooning [al-Ḥasan ibn] ʿAlī ibn [Abī] Suwayd:[3]

O Abode! Abū Suwayd's abode! [402]
Even birds of ill omen are wary of you.
May you be struck[4] by the arrows from Time's bow
with tribulation, disasters that last, never to change!
An abode left open for every foul deed: may it perish!
Those alighting there will lose and perish even worse,

1 Abū Salhab is another very obscure poet. Al-Marzubānī, *Muʿjam*, 510 lists him as Abū Salhab al-Fārisī, without further information. Salhab, an unusual word, means "tall, long-bodied" (said of a man or a horse). As told above, § 10, he was known to Wālibah ibn al-Ḥubāb, and in *Aghānī*, xviii, 105, he calls Wālibah "my friend". But the following story suggests that Abū Salhab died after 255/869, which is difficult to reconcile with acquaintance with Wālibah, who died c. 170/786.

2 The text has *qadima baʿḍ tujjār al-Baṣrah*, "a certain Basran merchant arrived", but what follows suggests that one should read *qadima baʿḍ al-tujjār al-Baṣrah*. Abū Ḥātim al-Sijistānī (on whom see above, p. 40) was a Basran scholar who died in 255/869.

3 The parentheses are added by Farrāj from the *Mukhtaṣar*. He has not been identified and the verses have not been found elsewhere.

4 I have taken *rumīta* to be an optative, but it could also be translated as "you have been struck".

Their lineages cut off, after their father,
without repute to be counted, or a past to be commemorated.
Their skins are stained with ancient baseness,
their clothes on their skins are filthy.
O rider, whose attacks cannot be approached when he is inflamed
in battle,[5] when wars flare up!
He closed a breach, defending, such as neither ʿAmr
nor ʿAntar, lion of knights, ever defended,[6]
Nor the two Rustams, or the one who feuded with his lord,
Shūbīn, when he disobeyed[7] and crushed the warriors;[8]
Or the protected territory of Kulayb, the day he protected it,
and Rabīʿah boasts of his glory:[9]
He did not protect as you protected your protected ground[10]
at a meal, when your bread is served.

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5 *Lā tuṣṭalā shaddātuhū ʿinda l-liqāʾi*; cf. Lane, *Lexicon*, ṣ l y: "*lā tuṣṭalā bi-nārihī* [lit. *One cannot warm himself by means of his fire*; meaning *one cannot approach him when he is inflamed with rage*, especially *in fight*, or *battle*] … The phrase may also be used satirically, as meaning *One will not seek his hospitality*". This is apparently what is meant here. The following martial imagery should also be read ironically: he defends his property like an inhospitable miser.

6 ʿAmr is ʿAmr ibn Maʿdī-Karib, famous warrior and poet, who converted to Islam in 10/631; ʿAntarah ibn Shaddād, another celebrated pre-Islamic warrior-poet, author of one of the *Muʿallaqāt* poems, who also became, as ʿAntar (the form used here), the hero of a lengthy popular epos.

7 The MS has *yaʿṣī*, "disobeyed"; I have not followed Farrāj, who reads *yafṣī*, which he glosses as *yafṣilu wa-yuzīlu*.

8 Rustam (thus, rather than Rustum as in the editions) is probably the most famous legendary hero in Persian pre-Islamic history. The other Rustam could be the Persian commander of the Sasanid army killed at the battle of al-Qādisiyyah in 15/636 in which the Muslims were victorious. Al-Buḥturī speaks of a horse whose "maternal uncles belonged to the two Rustams in Fārs" (*Dīwān*, 1744, al-Bāqillānī, *Iʿjāz*, 228, tr. Grunebaum, *A Tenth-Century Document*, 99). Shūbīn is an Arabicised form of Chūbīn, viz., Bahrām Chūbīn, or Wahrām Chōbēn, Sasanid general who rebelled against the emperor and briefly ruled as emperor until he was killed in AD 591.

9 The killing of Kulayb ibn Rabīʿah was the beginning of the most famous of pre-Islamic tribal wars, the War of al-Basūs (see above, p. 127); like ʿAntarah he became a hero of a popular epic. Rabīʿah, in this verse, stands for a large branch of the Northern Arabs.

10 The repetition is in the Arabic, with six forms of the root *ḤMY* in two verses.

113 Ismāʿīl the Killer (*al-Fattāk*)[1]

Al-Sadūsī al-Baṣrī told me: Ismāʿīl the Killer was a friend of Abū l-Haydhām;[2] they were as close as no other two and they were not separated for one moment. Then Abū l-Haydhām died and his friends used to visit his grave, but Ismāʿīl did not come near it. One day I said to him, "I have come to suspect that the loyalty you showed when he was alive was feigned!" [He replied,[3] "Why do you say that?" "Because you do not visit his grave, as those who loved him would normally go on doing."] "O no!" he replied, "It is not as you think. But there is no use, either now or in future, in visiting his grave, for he ‖ will not be aware of it [403] or know it. It is merely a custom of the common people. A poet put it well:[4]

> I'll find you lamenting me after my death,
> whereas when I was alive you did not feed me!

But my way of doing is what the poet of the Banū Asad said:[5]

> I respect you now that we are separated by earth,
> just as I respected you when you could see me."

We have memorised these verses by al-Fattāk:[6]

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1 Instead of al-Fattāk ("the Killer"), the *Mukhtaṣar* has the near-synonymous al-Qattāl. As noted above, one wonders if he is perhaps identical with Abū ʿAlī Ismāʿīl ibn Yūsuf al-Baṣrī (§ 81), who is called al-Qattāl or al-Fattāk in some sources. Nothing is known about him from other sources. There is nothing to suggest that he actually murdered anyone: *fattāk* could also mean "living outrageously, ungodly, recklessly", cf. *Aghānī*, i, 77, on a by no means murderous poet: "ʿUmar ibn Abī Rabīʿah lived eighty years, ungodly (*fataka*) for forty years and piously (*nasaka*) for forty years."

2 He is probably the same as the Abū l-Haydhām mentioned above, p. 426.

3 The bracketed passage is from the *Mukhtaṣar* (ed. Farrāj, Appendix, 459).

4 The verse, with many variants, is often quoted, attributed in some sources to ʿAbīd ibn al-Abraṣ (*Dīwān*, 70; Abū ʿUbayd al-Bakrī, *Faṣl al-maqāl*, 242; al-Baghdādī, *Khizānah*, xi, 257); or to a demon (*jānn*), see al-Qurashī, *Jamharah*, 47; or to al-Ḥuṭay'ah in al-Khālidiyyān, *Ashbāh*, i, 204; anonymously in al-Balādhurī, *Jumal*, xi, 98, Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, iv, 30 (with rhyme word *zādā* instead of *zādī*); and attributed to "al-Ḥanafī" (?) in al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, iii, 205 (also with *zādā*).

5 The identity of this poet of the Banū Asad is not known; the verse is attributed to an unnamed girl (*jāriyah*) or woman in many sources, including Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, iii, 278; Ibn Dāwūd, *Zahrah*, 472; al-Washshā', *Muwashshā*, 88; al-Kharā'iṭī, *Iʿtilāl*, 196; al-Sarrāj, *Maṣāriʿ*, ii, 88; al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyah*, iii, 242; al-Ibshīhī, *Mustaṭraf*, i, 204.

6 The verses, followed by a fifth, are in Abū Nuwās's *Dīwān* (iv, 329), in the section of *mudhakkarāt* (poems on boys). Vss. 1–2 are quoted anonymously in al-Qālī, *Dhayl*, 143.

There complains—will you pity him?—
to you the one you know about.[7]
When his body is stripped of its clothes
he is nothing but a standing spectre.[8]
I swear to God and His gracious gifts
that you, my murderer, are wronging me!
The openings of your sleeves are tied up
while there is ampleness in your pocket.[9]

He also said:[10]

He retains his faeces in his belly for one month,
for fear of going hungry when he shits it,
{192} And when he shits, he also cries for it
like an orphan crying for his father.

7 I have preferred to translate the version in Abū Nuwās, *Dīwān* and al-Qālī, *Dhayl*: *man anta bihī ʿālimū*, instead of *am anta bihī ʿālimū* ("or do you know about him?").

8 The other sources have "A young man (*fatan* instead of *matā*) whose spirit has left his body | so that he is now but a standing body".

9 Apparently an accusation of stinginess, but the interpretation and syntax of *wa-l-jaybu fīhi saʿatun lāzimū* are not wholly clear. The fifth verse in Abū Nuwās's *Dīwān* is "While I don't have a pocket in my shirt and | my signet ring does not fit on my little finger."

10 Anonymously in al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Bukhalāʾ*, 172.

114 Muḥammad ibn al-Qāsim al-Dimashqī[1]

Abū Ṭaybah told me:[2] "I asked Muḥammad ibn al-Qāsim al-Dimashqī, 'How much does Jābir ibn Muṣʿab[3] love you?'—for he was dying of loving him. [He replied,][4] 'I swear to God, he loves me more passionately than Jamīl ibn Maʿmar loved ‖ Buthaynah;[5] but he does not give me anything.'" [404]

This Muḥammad ibn al-Qāsim was a most charming, noble, and erudite person, with a great knowledge of historical reports. One was never bored when he talked in an assembly. He was, moreover, a good poet. He composed the following verses:[6]

Be insolent and abandon me; reject me if you must,
and turn my share of slumber into sustenance![7]
[Give the one who envies me what he wants
from you, and scatter my composure even more!]
Can you stop my heart from loving you
when I am looking at you, bewildered?
Or can you drive away my desires when longing
overwhelms a lover, if you have been made desirable?
You cannot prevent me from doing these two things,
neither one nor the other, so do as you like.
You, who robbed a white antelope of its beautiful throat
and its beautiful eyes, and took possession of its neck!
You made Hārūt's art redundant,
and, upon my life, you made Mārūt unemployed,[8]

1 Abū l-ʿAbbās Muḥammad ibn al-Qāsim al-Dimashqī (emendation by Eghbal and Farrāj of "al-Rustamī" as in the MS) has an entry in al-Marzubānī, *Muʿjam*, 369, quoted almost in full in al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, iv, 328, with a few verses on Abū Dulaf, during the reign of al-Muʿtaṣim. No further information on him has been found.

2 Farrāj suggests this may be a corruption of Abū l-Ṭayyib, viz., Abū l-Ṭayyib al-Qāsim ibn Muḥammad al-Numayrī, a friend of Ibn al-Muʿtazz's, see al-Shābushtī, *Diyārāt* (ed. ʿAwwād), 72, (ed. & tr. Kilpatrick), 86–87.

3 Perhaps he is the Jābir ibn Muṣʿab mentioned in a chain of transmitters in al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, III, ii, 971 and *Aghānī*, xviii, 71.

4 Parenthesis added by Farrāj.

5 On Jamīl ibn Maʿmar see above, p. 335.

6 Not found elsewhere. Vs. 2 is from the *Mukhtaṣar* (ed. Farrāj, Appendix, 459).

7 Interpretation not wholly clear.

8 Hārūt and Mārūt, mentioned in Q al-Baqarah 2:102, are two angels sent down to earth, in Babylon, believing, wrongly, they would not fall into sin like mankind (see above, p. 39). They taught people sorcery and magic.

So that they sought refuge in God from the magic of your eyes,
afraid your glance would say "Die, you two!"

He also said,[9]

He has settled in the bottom of my heart,
making his home there as a resident,
Where the arrow of his eyes has ended up,
from a glance of his languid looks;
One great in beauty, yet so small
that he is too small for one's gaze or the breeze.[10]
You recognise, in the colour of his cheeks
and his face, *the radiance of bliss*.[11]

9 The following poem is in the *Dīwān* of Khālid ibn Yazīd, the poet of the next entry (§ 115), see Arazi, *Amour*, 193. It is certainly in the style of Khālid and it may have been misplaced by a copyist.

10 Apparently meaning that a slight wind might blow him away.

11 Q al-Muṭaffiqīn 83:24, in a depiction of Heaven: *You will recognise in their faces the radiance of bliss*.

115 Khālid ibn Yazīd al-Kātib[1]

Yūsuf ibn Ibrāhīm told me: Ḥabīb ibn Aws said:[2] There are three poets who mentioned the night with different, unprecedented motifs. The first is al-Nābighah, who said:[3]

For you are like the night that will overtake me, [405]
even though I may imagine that the distance from you is great.

Then Bashshār, who said:[4]

My night was not long but I did not sleep:
a phantom that alighted banished slumber from me.

And Khālid ibn Yazīd, who said:[5]

You slept, not pitying the waking one;
a lover's night is without end.

Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad ibn ʿĀmir al-Baghdādī told me: I saw Khālid ibn Yazīd al-Kātib when young children were shouting at him, "Hey Khālid! Hey stupid!"

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1 Abū l-Haytham Khālid ibn Yazīd al-Kātib (d. 262/876 or 269/883 at an advanced age), a poet from Baghdad of Khorasanian origin. He served for some time as state secretary (*kātib*) with the army in the border provinces. Almost all his poetry deals with love, with the poet figuring as love-struck. The great majority of his poems have four verses. He has entries in *Aghānī*, xx, 272–287; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, ix, 250–256; Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, xi, 47–52 (wrongly called Khālid ibn Zayd al-Kātib); Ibn Shākir, *Fawāt*, i, 401–402; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xiii, 278–282. See also *GAS*, ii, 584–585, *EI2*, iv, 929 (J.E. Bencheikh); *EAL*, 430–431 (G.J.H. van Gelder). His *Dīwān* has been edited, with a study, by Albert Arazi (*Amour divin et amour profane*; a misleading title that wrongly suggests that his poetry is predominantly or even partly religious, or about loving God); his poetry has also been collected in al-Najjār, *Shuʿarāʾ ʿAbbāsiyyūn mansiyyūn*, II, ii, 43–199.

2 Ḥabīb ibn Aws is Abū Tammām (above, § 51).

3 Al-Nābighah al-Dhubyānī, famous pre-Islamic poet; see Ahlwardt (ed.), *The Divans*, 20. The often-quoted verse is from a poem in which the poet apologises to al-Nuʿmān, the Lakhmid king of al-Ḥīrah.

4 For Bashshār, see above, § 2. The verse is in Ibn Abī ʿAwn, *Tashbīhāt*, 208, *Aghānī*, iii, 150, 151 and many other sources. See also Beeston, *Selections*, 19–20 and Roman, *Baššār*, 218–219.

5 Khālid ibn Yazīd, *Dīwān* = Arazi, *Amour*, 98 and al-Najjār, *Shuʿarāʾ*, II, ii, 140 (the first of four verses); also often quoted, e.g. Ibn Dāwūd, *Zahrah*, 387 (followed by Bashshār's verse); Ibn Abī ʿAwn, *Tashbīhāt*, 210; al-Qālī, *Amālī*, i, 100 (followed by admiring words by Diʿbil); al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, ix, 253; ʿAbd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī, *Dalāʾil*, 492; Ibn Shākir, *Fawāt*, i, 402.

He threw bricks at them. It was because he had turned delusional in his old age; he became mentally deranged.[6]

His poetry is very good; no one else composed verse as delicate as his. He said:[7]

He shed his tears in places of sadness,
sleeplessly alive, eyelids dead.
His tears articulate his inner feelings,
his tongue speaks in allusions.
{193} He has eyes in all his limbs
that weep for his pawned heart.
Before he knew, Fate had surrendered him
to the glance of one unique in beauty.[8]

He also said:[9]

Knowing for certain that I am mortally ill because of you,
you rejected me. Which people know me better than you?[10]
If all of you is cast in all of me,
well, my place is more subtle than your place.[11]
Since you have disappeared in my every limb
my yearning calls out, shouting whenever you disappear.

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6 See *Aghānī*, xx, 280, where it is said that Abū Tammām lampooned Khālid with a verse: "All your poetry is excessively | stupid (*bārid*), O Khālid the Stupid!" (not found in his *Dīwān*), which he taught to young children, who took it up. In this version it is the boys' pestering that made him delusional, *muwaswis*. See also al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, ix, 251; Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, xi, 49; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xiii, 279.

7 Khālid ibn Yazīd, *Dīwān* = Arazi, *Amour*, 235, al-Najjār, *Shuʿarāʾ*, 11, ii, 186.

8 Tentative translation of *lam yadri illā ḥīna aslamahū | qadarun li-laḥẓati wāḥidi l-ḥusnī*. Instead of "the glance of" one could translate "the glance at".

9 Khālid ibn Yazīd, *Dīwān* = Arazi, *Amour*, 126, al-Najjār, *Shuʿarāʾ*, 11, ii, 155.

10 I read *mudnafun*, with the *Mukhtaṣar*, instead of *wāthiqun*, "trusting, confident", which does not seem to make sense (cf. the *Dīwān*: *annī naḥīlun wa-mudnafun*, "that I am emaciated and mortally ill"). I follow the *Dīwān* in reading *wa-ayyu l-nāsi* instead of *wa-anna l-nāsa*.

11 Instead of *mufraghan* ("cast, moulded") the *Dīwān* has *mafzaʿan* ("a place of refuge"). I read, with the MS, *fa-inna makānī*, instead of the equally possible *fa-ayyu makānin* ("well, what place …"), as in the editions and the *Mukhtaṣar*. *Alṭaf*, "more subtle", perhaps because the emaciated lover's body is more ethereal than corporeal. A version of this verse is quoted anonymously in al-Ibshīhī, *Mustaṭraf*, i, 40, in a list of verses serving as proverbs or current sayings ("If you are in my thoughts, my heart, my eyes, | well, what place is more subtle than your place?").

Where can I get away from the beauty of your face?
Whither can I turn from it when it comes?

He also said:[12] [406]

How could the guardian's eye have betrayed the guardian?[13]
It missed me when I saw my loved one.
It pitied me and helped me! So I kissed with my eye,[14]
together with my beloved, the guardian.

12 Khālid ibn Yazīd, *Dīwān* = Arazi, *Amour*, 247 (a rare two-liner, in the Appendix to the *Dīwān*, taken from Ibn al-Muʿtazz's *Ṭabaqāt*); al-Najjār, *Shuʿarāʾ*, II, ii, 111; not found elsewhere.

13 The *raqīb*, "guardian, chaperone", who spies on the lovers' privacy, is a common personage in Arabic love poetry. See *EI2*, viii, 406–407, "Raḳīb" (Teresa Garulo).

14 On "kissing" with the eye, compare a verse by Tamīm ibn al-Muʿizz (d. 274/984): *Qabbaltu man ahwā bi-ʿaynī wa-lam | yashʿur bi-taqbīliya khadda l-ḥabīb*, "I kissed the one I love with my eye, when he [viz., the guardian] | was unaware that I kissed the beloved's cheek" (*Dīwān*, 50).

116 Aḥmad ibn ʿAbd al-Salām[1]

Al-Khaṣīb ibn Muḥammad al-Asadī told me: Aḥmad ibn ʿAbd al-Salām said to me,[2] "One day I came past Bāb al-Ṭāq together with a young son of mine. We encountered a funeral procession followed by lots of people, men and women, the latter crying and lamenting. One of the women was exclaiming, 'Where are they taking you, father? To the abode of decay, the house of desolation and darkness, where is no joy, no light, no food, no drink, no feasting!' Then that little son of mine turned to me and said, 'Daddy, they're taking that dead man to our house!' I asked him, 'Why is that?' 'Because', he said, 'everything that woman says is just as at home.'"

Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-Ṭarasūsī[3] told us: I have seen Aḥmad ibn ʿAbd al-Salām, who had no second in composing poetry in Baghdad,[4] even though he had low expectations for it.[5] He was always poor, until his death. He became delusional towards the end of his life. I have seen young children shouting at him, "Hey scribe of on-tick!"[6] Then he would tear his clothes and swear never to leave his house again.

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1 Abū Jaʿfar Aḥmad ibn ʿAbd al-Salām al-Ruṣāfī has an entry in al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, vii, 59–60, where he is called a poet from Baghdad who lived a long life; he was close to Khālid ibn Yazīd al-Kātib. Some verses on al-Ḥasan ibn Wahb and Saʿiḍ ibn Salm are quoted. He is sporadically found elsewhere, e.g. as the narrator of a story, above, p. 373, or in al-Qālī, *Dhayl al-Amālī*, 143, where he recites verses by Ismāʿīl al-Fattāk quoted above. A poem on the grammarian al-Mubarrad is quoted in al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, iv, 605; for another poem on al-Mubarrad see also Ibn al-Anbārī, *Nuzhah*, 169–170, Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, xix, 114, which in al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, vi, 396 is attributed to "Aḥmad ibn Salām al-Ruḍāʾī", clearly an error (as al-Ṣafadī himself suspects).

2 As Farrāj notes, there is a very similar story in *Aghānī*, xvi, 252 about Ibn Darrāj the Sponger (al-Ṭufaylī).

3 The town in Cilicia known as Tarsus is Ṭarasūs in Arabic, and the *nisbah* is Ṭarasūsī, according to Yāqūt's dictionary, al-Samʿānī's *Ansāb*, and the lexicographers, not Ṭarsūs (as e.g. in *EI2*, x, 306 and many other publications). For the following, see Gruendler, "Verse and Taxes", 91, with a translation, 108.

4 Here called Madīnat al-Salām, "the City of Peace".

5 Not entirely clear; Gruendler has "he held no hope in [drawing benefit from] it". This follows Farrāj's emendation of *lam yakun lahū fīhi aṣlan* as *lam yakun lahū fīhi amalun*.

6 The text in the edition, *Yā kātib al-sharīṭī* (or *al-shurayṭī*), does not make much sense. Gruendler translates it as "O net maker's scribe!" I read *al-surrayṭā*, a variant of *al-surrayṭ*, see the proverb *al-akhdh surrayṭ(ā) wa-l-qaḍāʾ ḍurrayṭ(ā)* (al-ʿAskarī, *Jamharah*, i, 139; al-Maydānī, *Majmaʿ*, i, 75; Ibn ʿUbayd al-Bakrī, *Faṣl al-maqāl*, 379), meaning, "taking something (and incurring a debt) is easy to swallow, but having to pay up (to the creditor) makes one fart" (or "one blows a raspberry", according to another interpretation; see e.g. Lane, *Lexicon*, *sRṬ*). My translation fits in with the poet's poverty.

He said:[7]

The silk brocade of your face, not that of your divan,
gave me sorrows and sicknesses.
I weep over you, burning unrelentingly, [407]
you who are clothed in beauty, seductive!
The apples of your cheeks are red on cotton-white:
eyes can there see pearls and coral.
But no sooner had I seen something I rejoice in
than thinking of you renewed my sadness.
A full moon, shining above a twig, pulled down by
a backside that sways when it is shaken, plump;
[God never created a face that matches it—
I ask God's forgiveness if I neglect Ḥamdān.][8]
I seek refuge in a glance from you that bewitches me
from being made to swallow rejection and abandonment by you.

7 Not found elsewhere.
8 Farrāj adds this verse from the *Mukhtaṣar*.

117 al-Ḥusayn ibn Diʿbil[1]

Abū l-Ward told me: I saw Muḥammad ibn Wāṣil[2] in Fārs, reviewing an army of Bedouins of the tribe of Tamīm, of his own tribe. He found them looking extremely shabby and badly attired. Turning away from them he reviewed some men of the tribe of ʿAbd al-Qays from al-Baḥrayn,[3] but he found them to be fitted out even more wretchedly, in scruffy clothes. He turned to al-Ḥusayn ibn Diʿbil, who had come to visit him and had been honoured by him; he had accepted poems by him and had taken him under his wing for the sake of his father.[4]
{194} "I say, Diʿbilī!" he said. "At your command, Emir!" replied al-Ḥusayn. ‖ The Emir said, "If you recite to me something on how these Bedouins resemble one another, I'll give you ten thousand dirhams!" Al-Ḥusayn said, "I hope, Emir, that I will succeed in reciting what you want. They are as Ḥabīb ibn Aws al-Ṭāʾī said:[5]

[408] Vile, base people, yes, 'noble' as they claim themselves,
all look-alikes, as the squint-eyed resemble the cross-eyed."

"Bravo, by God!" said Ibn Wāṣil. "Exactly as I had in mind!" He gave orders for him to be given ten thousand dirhams.

We have memorised these verses by al-Ḥusayn ibn Diʿbil, on al-Ḥārith ibn Sīmā:[6]

This is the roaring of the lion, so stand up straight, you two!
And do not sleep or let others sleep,
But go, hurry, leave your slumber,
Let your camels go at quick-pace and fast-march![7]

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1 According to Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, i, 508 the poetry of al-Ḥusayn, the son of Diʿbil (above, § 45) amounted to 200 folios. He does not seem to have separate entries in other reference works. He is called al-Diʿbilī above (p. 579) and twice in the following.

2 Muḥammad ibn Wāṣil al-Tamīmī rebelled in 250/864–865 and seized Fārs and Kirmān, defeating an army sent to him by Caliph al-Muʿtamid, see *EI3*, v, 158, in entry "Kirmān" (B.M. Weischer), al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, iii, 1839.

3 See the note on p. 317.

4 Tentative translation of *raʿā lahū fī abīh*.

5 Abū Tammām, see his *Dīwān*, iv, 525, in a poem complaining about life in Egypt.

6 Al-Ḥārith ibn Sīmā al-Sharābī, governor of Fārs, was killed in 256/870 fighting Muḥammad ibn Wāṣil (al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, iii, 1839). The verses (in *rajaz* metre) have not been found elsewhere. They rhyme in *-īmā* and the poem obviously must have included a verse mentioning Ibn Sīmā. The word for "lion" in vs. 1, *layth*, may allude to Aḥmad ibn al-Layth, an ally of Ibn Wāṣil (al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, iii, 1839).

7 *ʿAnīq* and *rasīm* are two kinds of camel gait.

We have also selected the following verses by him:[8]

Tears poured out by burning breaths,
racing from my eyes on to my cheeks:
They rise to my eyes, collected
from my insides by my sighs, then dispersing.
A spring-rain falls steadily on my cheeks,
the eyes' water flooding through excessive love.
I only became aware that sleep had been cut off
when I saw that my eyelids could not meet.

The poetry of al-Diʿbilī is very charming.

8 Not found elsewhere.

118 Abū Hiffān[1]

Abū Naṣr al-Naḥwī informed us: Abū Hiffān and Abū l-ʿAynāʾ[2] sat together at a meal. A *fālūdhajah*[3] was served. Abū Hiffān said to Abū l-ʿAynāʾ, "I swear to God, this is hotter than your place in Hell!" Abū l-ʿAynāʾ replied, "May God cool it with your poetry!"[4]

[409] Muslim ibn ʿAmr told me: Isḥāq ibn Bulbul told me:[5] ‖ "I met Abū Hiffān, who was riding a hired donkey. 'Abū Hiffān!' I said, 'Are you, being who you are, riding this?!' Then he recited:

I am riding a hired donkey
because there are few who can be asked for a favour.
As for noble, generous people,
they have been buried in the earth."

Choice poetry by him are the verses on ʿUbayd Allāh ibn Yaḥyā ibn Khāqān, who had been presented with various gifts on the day of Nayrūz:[6]

I entered the market to seek and buy
something original I could give;

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1 Mentioned several times in the preceding, Abū Hiffān ʿAbd Allāh ibn Aḥmad ibn Ḥarb al-Mihzamī (d. between 255/869 and 257/871) was a connoisseur of poetry and reports about poets. Of his several works one on Abū Nuwās, known personally to him, has been preserved (*Akhbār Abī Nuwās*, edited by Farrāj with an introduction on the author). Although according to Ibn al-Muʿtazz "his poems are found everywhere", little of it has been preserved. He has entries in Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, i, 446–447, who saw "part of a large work on the art of poetry (*Ṣināʿat al-shiʿr*)" by him; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, xi, 5–6; Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, xii, 54–55 (as Abū Haffān); Ibn al-Anbārī, *Nuzhah*, 156; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xvii, 27–30; and see *EI2*, *Suppl.*, 24–25 (J.E. Bencheikh); *GAS*, i, 372–373, xvi, 197–198; *EAL*, 35 (P.F. Kennedy); Toorawa, *Ibn Abī Ṭāhir Ṭayfūr*, 110–112.

2 On him see below, §122. For the anecdote see also al-Marzubānī, *Nūr al-qabas*, 323; al-Ābī, *Nathr al-durr*, iii, 199; Ibn Ḥamdūn, *Tadhkirah*, vii, 238.

3 *Fālūdhaj*(*ah*), from Middle Persian *pālūdag* ("strained"), a sweet not unlike Turkish delight, made of wheat, almonds, and honey or sugar, was a popular dish often mentioned in anecdotes. For recipes see e.g. Perry (ed.), *Medieval Arab Cookery*, 85, 152, 419–420, Nasrallah, *Annals*, 382–387, 595–596.

4 As mentioned earlier, dull or insipid poetry was often called *bārid*, "cold".

5 The anecdote is in Ibn al-Anbārī, *Nuzhah*, 156, al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, xi, 6, where instead of Isḥāq ibn Bulbul it is Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Thawābah (a prominent state secretary, d. 277/890 or 273/886), who is also mentioned below.

6 ʿUbayd Allāh ibn Yaḥyā ibn Khāqān (d. 264/877) was vizier under al-Mutawakkil and, after an interval, under al-Muʿtamid; see *EI2*, iii, 824, "Ibn Khāqān" (D. Sourdel). On Nayrūz (or Nawrūz) see above, p. 259. For the following see ps.-al-Jāḥiẓ, *Maḥāsin*, 374–375 (anonymously).

But the only original things I found I could offer
were original poems of praise.
When we praise you
we respect your glory.

'Ubayd Allāh was pleased with his verses and sent him a considerable part of what he had been given. Abū Hiffān said on Ibn Thawābah:[7]

Al-Thawābī is a man who has no ambitions
except being lordly and glorious.
The rain was unable to be as generous as he,
so he himself took that role for us this year.

He said on al-Mubarrad:[8]

Haven't you seen Fatḥ and how he was struck
with disease and his phlegm playing up?
Al-Mubarrad shot an arrow of his coldness (*bard*)
at him, and he was stricken with hemiplegia.[9]

Abū Hiffān is one of the well-known and celebrated poets and his poems are found everywhere. He was one of the servants[10] of Abū Nuwās and one of those who transmitted his poetry. {195}

7 Not found elsewhere.

8 Not found elsewhere. The epigram puns on the nickname of the great philologist and grammarian Abū l-'Abbās Muḥammad ibn Yazīd known as al-Mubarrad, which literally means "the one made cold". In some sources it is said to have been originally al-Mubarrid (literally, "the one who makes cold", but having the sense of "he who affirms truth"). See *EI2*, vii, 279, "al-Mubarrad" (R. Sellheim). Fatḥ is probably al-Fatḥ ibn Khāqān (on whom see above, p. 536), even though I have found no report of his suffering from hemiplegia (it may be poetic hyperbole).

9 *Fa-qurṭisa bi-l-fālijī*; see al-Zabīdī, *Tāj* (QRṬS): *yuqālu ramā fa-qarṭasa idhā aṣāba l-qirṭās, ay al-gharaḍ al-manṣūb*, "One says, 'he shot and *qarṭasa*' when he hit the *qirṭās* (piece of paper), i.e., the target set up". Hemiplegia, which could be the result of a stroke, is said to be caused by excessive phlegm, associated with coldness in traditional medicine.

10 Farrāj thinks that *ghilmān* may be a corruption of *khullān*, "close friends".

[410] **119 Yaʿqūb the Date Seller (*al-Tammār*)**[1]

Ibn al-Dīk told me:[2] Yaʿqūb al-Tammār (the Date Seller) said to me, "One night I crept on to a servant. He woke up and said, 'What are you doing?' I replied, 'I got up to drink some water.' 'You son of a so-and-so, is my belly a bucket or a water-tank?' "

This al-Tammār was one of the notable friends of Abū Nuwās. Among the verses by him that we have memorised are these:[3]

O gazelle! But for what I bear inside me
and in my heart, but for those burning fires,
My tears would tear down the screen of my love
and passionate love would drown me in a sea.[4]

He also said:

I had been remiss in matters of love,
I repented of all my worrying and sorrowing,
And I had returned to a life of comfort,
my mind serene, my heart unoccupied,
Until a black-eyed fawn appeared to me
and I nearly breathed my last forever!
One who usurps the hearts of lovers;
thus it happened that my heart became bewildered;
[I became someone whose heart is usurped,
ready for the business of love.][5]

1 Abū Yūsuf Yaʿqūb ibn Yazīd the Date Seller (al-Tammār) is listed in al-Marzubānī's *Muʿjam*, 501 as a poet attached to Caliph al-Muntaṣir (r. 247–248/861–862) and who died towards the end of the reign of al-Muʿtamid (r. 256–279/870–892). This is difficult to reconcile with Ibn al-Muʿtazz's statement that he was a companion of Abū Nuwās, who died c. 198/813, a friendship not confirmed in any source known to me. Yaʿqūb also has entries in al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, xvi, 420–421 (which repeats al-Marzubānī's data) and al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xxviii, 533–534. Verses by him in al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, v, 56 also link him with the reign of al-Muntaṣir. In Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabā'*, xv, 166–167 he appears in the company of ʿAlī ibn Yaḥyā ibn al-Munaǧǧim (d. 275/888–889) and Abū Hiffān.

2 In the *Mukhtaṣar* it is Ibn Abī l-Dīk. The following is not found elsewhere. For *dabīb*, "creeping", in the sense of raping or sexually assaulting sleeping boys, see also above, p. 110.

3 These and the following verses have not been found elsewhere.

4 The lack of tears, which hides his love, is explained by the hot passion that evaporates them.

5 The verse is from the *Mukhtaṣar* (ed. Farrāj, Appendix, 460). Translation of *mushammiran fī ḥājati l-ḥubbī* uncertain.

Who can help a lover whose mind is in the hands
of a flirtatious soft-voiced one with an unbeliever's heart?
When I was at my wits' end, I said,
"Aḥmad, my Lord has commanded you
To be kind to a neighbour; a neighbour deserves
respect, and also the companion at your side.[6]
Aḥmad, my desire, my wish!
To be proud of you is enough for me, enough!
Though passionate love may be a blemish to amorous men, [411]
there is no blemish in passionately loving you.
How dear to me is a street that has no
master … (?)[7]
I would be content, if you are not fair in love,
if, my lord, you read my letters."

He composed good poetry that is found among people. This al-Tammār is one of the noteworthy poets who have good natural talent and little artificiality.

6 See Q al-Nisāʾ 4:36: *Be kind to parents (…), to the neighbour who is of your kin, the neighbour who is a stranger, and the companions at your side.*

7 I do not understand *Yā bi-abī l-darbu lladhī laysa lahū | mawlan bihī mubtahaju l-darbī.* The first hemistich does not scan correctly as *sarīʿ*; read perhaps *laysa lī | mawlan bihī,* "in which I have no master".

120 al-Ukhayṭil Barqūqā[1]

Aḥmad ibn Ziyād al-Fārisī told me: Al-Ukhayṭil said to me, "One day I recited some poem of mine to Abū Tammām. He said to me, 'Go [and say] what you like! After I am gone people will have only you!'"[2]

Abū Yaʿqūb al-Baṣrī told me: Al-Ukhayṭil, known as Barqūqā, used to sell coins[3] in Bāb al-Karkh. He is among the good, proficient poets. Among the verses by him that we have memorized and which we find charming are these:[4]

Don't you see how refined this day is,[5]
  and how the tears of the clouds are pouring down,
And how pleasant the earth is with its moisture,
  with its flowers woken up from sleep?
If it were up for sale, pleasure seekers would buy it,
  even for a steep price,

1 He is Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Shuʿayb, known as al-Ukhayṭil ("little Akhṭal", perhaps after the famous Umayyad poet al-Akhṭal, who was sometimes mockingly called al-Ukhayṭil by his adversary Jarīr), a *mawlā* of the Banū Makhzūm, from al-Ahwāz, who came to Baghdad and composed panegyrics on Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Ṭāhir. He has entries in al-Marzubānī, *Muʿjam*, 376–399; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, iii, 426; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, iii, 307–308; Ibn Faḍl Allāh, *Masālik* (ed. al-Jubūrī), xiv, 597–598. These sources do not mention the nickname Barqūqā (thus vowelled by Farrāj), which looks like an Aramaicised form of *barqūq* (or *burqūq*), "apricot", and, like "apricot", derived from Greek πραικόκιον, which in turn derives from Latin *praecoquum* ("precocious, ripe before its time"). It is not clear why he is called thus. Al-Mubarrad, *Kāmil*, ii, 356 quotes the two verses on a crucified man (see below) as being by "al-Akhṭal", followed by a comment of Abū l-Ḥasan (al-Akhfash): "The Akhṭal he means is a modern poet from Basra known as al-Ukhayṭil, who is [also] known as Barqūqā." In Ibn Abī ʿAwn, *Tashbīhāt*, 22, he is called "Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-Ukhayṭil al-Wāsiṭī known as Barqūqā". Verses by "Barqūq al-Akhṭal" are quoted in al-Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥijāb* (in his *Rasāʾil*, ii, 57; the epistle is probably by Ibn al-Marzubān, not by al-Jāḥiẓ, see Zakeri, "Yet Another Pseudo-al-Jāḥiẓ?").

2 The parenthesis (*fa-qul*, "and say") is from the *Mukhtaṣar*, not added by Farrāj. It is al-Buḥturī (more plausibly than al-Ukhayṭil) who is addressed similarly by Abū Tammām in al-Ṣūlī, *Akhbār al-Buḥturī*, 69; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, xv, 622; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, vi, 24 (and compare *Aghānī*, xxi, 48–49).

3 *Fulūs* (sg. *fals*, from Latin *follis*), copper or bronze coins. Farrāj suggests that this may be a corruption of *fuʾūs* ("adzes, axes") or *kuʾūs* ("cups"); but selling coins (*bayʿ al-fulūs*) is mentioned in legal compendia and fatwa collections.

4 This and the next quotation are not found elsewhere.

5 The day is said to have *ẓarf*, "refined behaviour" in being pleasant; weeping (from passionate love) is also among the signs of *ẓarf* (e.g. al-Washshāʾ, *Muwashshā*, 67).

And a lover, a drinking companion, and an enamoured one {196}
resisted that reproach in his eyes.[6]

He also said:

O heartbreak,[7] O choking torments of separation
and a loved one I never see or meet!
He has two temple-locks, with split strands; [412]
my heartstrings[8] tug at him in competition,
For cheeks that are caressed
by clustered ringlets hanging like price tags.[9]
The eyes regard him wherever they can,
but there is no way of meeting him.
[On his chest pomegranate breasts are proudly set
above belly-folds shown by a loosened belt.][10]
Nursemaids take turns, every day, to rub
the sides of his face down to the collarbones.
I say to him, after my heart was destroyed
by a sickness that relentlessly choked me,
"Moon of the tribe! Who will help an enamoured one,
a captive of love, in fetters?"

He composed a wonderful verse with a comparison of a crucified man; nobody produced anything like it:[11]

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6 The interpretation of this verse is not clear to me. Perhaps one or more verses are missing.

7 *Ayā kabidāh*, literally, "O (my) liver!"

8 *Banāt al-qalb*, literally, "the heart's daughters"; cf. Ibn al-Athīr, *Muraṣṣaʿ*, 181, al-Suyūṭī, *Muzhir*, i, 524.

9 I follow Farrāj's emendations based on the *Mukhtaṣar* (*yujammishu ... muzarfanatu l-biṭāqī* instead of *yukhammishu ... muzarrafatu l-niṭāqī*). His interpretation of *biṭāq* as "pupils of the eyes" (*ḥadaqāt*), however, is based on an error in al-Fīrūzābādī's *Qāmūs* (see al-Zabīdī, *Tāj al-ʿarūs*, *BṬQ*). A *biṭāqah* is a "piece of paper", more specifically a ticket or price-card attached to a garment, so perhaps the dangling ringlets serve to advertise the beloved (with thanks to Nefeli Papoutsakis, personal communication).

10 Farrāj inserts this verse from the *Mukhtaṣar*. It appears that the loved one is female, although masculine forms are used consistently. Such poetic gender fluidity or ambiguity is occasionally found; cf. Sībawayh, *Kitāb*, i, 281 (anonymously): *ka-an thadyāhu ḥuqqānī* ("his breasts are like two caskets"), or *Aghānī*, v, 190, Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī on a singing-girl compared to a *shādin* ("fawn", a masculine word): "He is two halves: a twig and a sand-hill, | the twig's chest adorned with two pomegranates".

11 The verses are attributed to al-Ukhayṭil in al-Mubarrad, *Kāmil*, ii, 356; Ibn Abī ʿAwn, *Tash-*

He is like a lover who has stretched out his arms
on the day of separation, to say farewell to one who departs;
Or someone who gets up from his slumber, relaxed,
protractedly, lazily stretching himself.

bīhāt, 22; al-Marzubānī, *Muʿjam*; 376, al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, iii, 308; al-Rāghib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ii, 115. They are also quoted (the second verse with changes) in a poem (8 vss.) by the poet and literary critic Abū l-Ḥasan Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Ṭabāṭabā (d. 322/934) in al-ʿAskarī, *Dīwān al-maʿānī*, i, 300; Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, xvii, 155. The two verses are, anonymously, in al-Jurjānī, *Asrār*, 171 (German tr. by Ritter, *Geheimnisse*, 206). See Ullmann, *Das Motif der Kreuzigung*, 141–145 on the two poems, with translations, commentary, and more references. As Hellmut Ritter remarks, this and similar verses are often admired, but "an der grausamkeit des gegenstandes hat niemand anstoß genommen" (nobody has taken offence at the gruesomeness of the topic).

121 al-Qiṣāfī, Whose Name Is ʿAmr[1] [413]

Al-S.k.z (?)[2] ibn Muḥammad al-Anbārī told me: I saw Haddāb ibn Yaḥyā al-Tamīmī when he asked Muḥammad ibn Wāṣil about Ibn Abī Sulaymān al-Hāshimī,[3] who was Haddāb's son-in-law,[4] begging forgiveness[5] for a crime the latter had committed. But Ibn Wāṣil said to him, "No, not under any circumstance! I swear to God, I will not forgive him and I shall not fall short in chastising him!" Haddāb began to cry so badly that people laughed about his excessive crying; he also had a long beard. Ibn Wāṣil turned to al-Qiṣāfī and looked at him, smiling. Al-Qiṣāfī said, "May God make the Emir prosper! If I compose a couple of interesting verses on his crying, what will you give me?" The Emir replied, "I'll be generous to you!" Then al-Qiṣāfī said:[6]

His tears run over his beard,
while he stands crying for his son-in-law.
He is such a fool that he does not know [414]
what are bad words and what are good words.

Among al-Qiṣāfī's fine verses are these:[7]

I know this street well, because I love the one who lives there;
and love invites passion that brings distress.
If a street could weep for a grieving one,
or have pity, or deliver letters,

1 Above, § 61, is the section on ʿAmr al-Qiṣāfī, so the present section ostensibly deals with the same poet. However, as Farrāj explains in a long note, the above-mentioned ʿAmr al-Qiṣāfī is perhaps the father of the subject of this section. The younger al-Qiṣāfī is mentioned in Ibn al-Jarrāḥ, *Waraqah*, 8 as being called Abū Naṣr and on p. 9 as *al-Qiṣāfī al-shāʿir al-aṣghar* ("al-Qiṣāfī junior, the poet"). In the MS it is "al-Quḍāʿī", a corruption. Nothing else is known about Abū Naṣr al-Qiṣāfī.

2 Unclear; Eghbal thinks it may be Yashkur, but in Abbasid times this would be an unusual name.

3 Haddāb ibn Yaḥyā and Ibn Abī Sulaymān al-Hāshimī have not been identified; the latter is apparently a member of the Abbasid family. For Muḥammad ibn Wāṣil al-Tamīmī see above, § 117.

4 *Khatan* may also be "father-in-law" or "brother-in-law".

5 Following Farrāj's emendation, reading *yataʿāfā* instead of *yatakāfā*.

6 In al-Ṣūlī, *Adab al-kuttāb*, 171–172 the verses (with a third) are attributed to Ibn Bādhān al-Iṣbahānī, mocking a state secretary from Isfahan whose son-(or father-, or brother-)in-law had died; al-Ṣūlī adds that they had also been attributed to ʿAbd al-Ṣamad ibn al-Muʿadhdhal.

7 Not found elsewhere.

It would deliver my letters, have pity, and weep,
and it would be a way to my master.
O gazelle of ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd, what have your eyes
done to my heart? They brought down sorrows,
From a glance, after I was
bewildered, my heart enamoured, grieving.
My eyes drew me to you, it was foreordained;
O evil-eyed look, what has it brought to me?
I ask God that He may give me your tender love
one day, that I may have my way in being with you!

122 Abū l-ʿAynāʾ[1]

Abū Sulaymān al-ʿUkbarī told me:[2] When Abū l-ʿAynāʾ visited al-Ḥasan ibn Sahl and complained ‖ about his straitened circumstances, al-Ḥasan gave orders {197} that he be given five thousand dirhams. "May God make the vizier prosper!" said Abū l-ʿAynāʾ, "I do not regard a little from you as little, nor do I regard much from you as much!" "Why is that?" asked the vizier. He replied, "I do not regard much from you as much, because you can do much more; and I do not regard little from you as little, because it is still more than much from anyone else." Al-Ḥasan liked his words and said, "Write it down and give him another five thousand!"

Abū l-Ḥasan ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad al-Baghdādī told me:[3] One day al-Mutawakkil said to Abū l-ʿAynāʾ, "I am told that you like to be a bottom."[4] He replied, ‖ "Commander of the Believers, the *mawlā* of a tribe belongs to them." Abū l- [415] ʿAynāʾ was a *mawlā* of the Abbasids.

Zuhayr ibn Ḥarb al-Jurjānī told me: Abū l-ʿAynāʾ said to me, "I had an uncle who was always known as my father's brother,[5] which annoyed him. He resisted it strongly but to no avail. Then, when my father died, he became known as being my uncle. 'This is even worse!' he said, 'I wish we had remained as before!'"

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1 Abū l-ʿAynāʾ is far more famous as a wit than as a poet. He is Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad ibn al-Qāsim ibn Khallād, a *mawlā* of the Abbasids, born in al-Ahwāz, grown up in Basra. He became blind in middle age and died at an advanced age c. 282/895–896. Early collections of his prose sayings and letters include one by his contemporary Ibn Abī Ṭāhir (on whom see the next entry), which is not preserved but often quoted, e.g. in *Aghānī*. On Abū l-ʿAynāʾ see al-Shābushtī, *Diyārāt* (ed. ʿAwwād), 79–92, (ed. & tr. Kilpatrick), 100–115; Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, i, 388–389; al-Marzubānī, *Muʿjam*, 401–402 (where it is said that "he composed very little poetry"); idem, *Nūr al-qabas*, 322–324; al-Ābī, *Nathr al-durr*, iii, 195–231; al-Ḥuṣrī, *Zahr*, 321–329; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, iv, 284–295; Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, xviii, 286–306; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, iv, 343–348; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, iv, 341–344; idem, *Nakt al-himyān*, 265–270; and see *EI2*, i, 108 (C. Brockelmann); *GAS*, ii, 519–520, xvi, 410, xvii, 56–58, Toorawa, *Ibn Abī Ṭāhir Ṭayfūr*, 112–117.

2 Al-Murtaḍā, *Amālī*, i, 302–303; Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, ii, 135 (al-Ḥasan addressed by an unnamed man).

3 See Ibn Abī ʿAwn, *Ajwibah*, 202; al-Ābī, *Nathr al-durr*, iii, 203; al-Ḥuṣrī, *Zahr*, 323; idem, *Jamʿ*, 282. In a version in al-Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥayawān*, vi, 490 the dialogue is between an unnamed man and his servant or slave (*ghulām*). The saying about the *mawlā* is an often-quoted hadith of the Prophet Muḥammad.

4 *Maʾbūn*, literally, "suffering from *ubnah*, a craving for being a passive sexual partner"; see e.g. al-Rāghib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ii, 149–151.

5 *Lā yuʿrafu illā bi abī*.

Zuhayr told me: A boy was born to Abū l-ʿAynāʾ. Ibn Mukarram[6] went to visit him; the two were always exchanging jokes and witticisms. When Ibn Mukarram wanted to leave, he took a stone from his sleeve and put it before Abū l-ʿAynāʾ, who did not notice it at first. Then he went off. Abū l-ʿAynāʾ's hand happened to touch the stone. He asked his servant, "Who put this stone here?" The man replied, "Ibn Mukarram did." Abū l-ʿAynāʾ said, "May God put him to shame![7] 'The son to the bed, to the fornicator the stone!' ".

Admired are his verses on ʿAlī ibn al-Jahm:[8]

> Ibn Jahm[9] wanted to compose a poem in praise of
> the Commander of Believers; he recited the call to prayer.
> I said to him, "Don't hurry with the second call,
> for I am not ritually clean!" Said, he, "Nor am I!"[10]

People have transmitted these two verses as being by Marwān, which is incorrect. [Fine verses by Abū l-ʿAynāʾ are the following:[11]

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6 Muḥammad ibn Mukarram, a state secretary (*kātib*), is often mentioned in connection with Abū l-ʿAynāʾ; see al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, v, 53–54. Toorawa, *Ibn Abī Ṭāhir Ṭayfūr*, 175 n. 98 identifies him incorrectly as ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn Mukarram, "the member of a princely family of Oman." Farrāj vowels the name as Ibn Mukram, but Ibn Mukarram is found more often, and it makes for a better rhyme with *al-mudhammam* in the letter by Ibn Abī Ṭāhir to Abū ʿAlī al-Baṣīr, berating him for befriending him (Ṣafwat [ed.], *Jamharat rasāʾil al-ʿArab*, iv, 303). For the anecdote see al-Ābī, *Nathr al-durr*, iii, 204; al-Ḥuṣrī, *Jamʿ*, 76.

7 Farrāj inserts here an explanatory sentence, taken from al-Ḥuṣrī: "He alludes to the words of the Prophet (God bless and preserve him!) …" The sense of this well-known hadith is that the paternity of a child goes to the marital bed, i.e., the husband, whether or not he is the biological father. There are two views about *al-ḥajar*, "the stone", in the second half. According to some it refers to stoning, the (non-Qur'anic) punishment for an adulterer or fornicator, subject to certain conditions (see also above, p. 471). Many, however, take it to mean "disappointment" here (i.e., the adulterer can claim no right to paternity). One may compare curses such as *bi-fīhi l-turb wa-l-ḥajar* ("Dust and stones in his mouth!"), or *bi-fīka l-ḥajar* ("A stone in your mouth!"), see Ullmann, *Flüche*, 90–91.

8 For ʿAlī ibn al-Jahm see above, § 68. The verses are in al-Shābushtī, *Diyārāt* (ed. ʿAwwād), 86, (ed. & tr. Kilpatrick), 108–109; they are attributed to Marwān ibn Abī Ḥafṣah in al-Marzubānī, *Muwashshaḥ*, 527 and al-Ḥuṣrī, *Jamʿ*, 232–233 (compare the last sentence of the present section).

9 Thus, without the article; *Diyārāt* has "ʿAlī".

10 Kilpatrick (428 note 49) wrongly thinks that ʿAlī ibn al-Jahm may have been "making a song and dance about reciting his poem", which Abū l-ʿAynāʾ jokingly interpreted as a call to prayer (the performing of which requires ritual purity). The poet, rather, opened a poem (not quoted here) with the words *Allāhu akbaru*, like the beginning of the *adhān*; see al-Marzubānī, *Muwashshaḥ*, 527.

11 The bracketed passage is from the *Mukhtaṣar* (ed. Farrāj, Appendix, 460). The verses

If you do not send for me, and if I come but am not admitted,
I fill my ears with your excuse.[12]
I came to you, with longing, but I saw no doorkeeper[13]
or anyone who did not look angry,
As if I were a creditor demanding payment, or
the appearance of a chaperone, or the leaving of a loved one.]

are in (ps.-)al-Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥijāb* (*Rasāʾil*, ii, 84), said to be addressed to Ibn al-Mudabbir, also al-Qālī, *Amālī*, ii, 165–166; vss. 2–3 in Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, i, 229, al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, vi, 109.

12 *Bi-ʿudhrī minka* (*Mukhtaṣar*) is clearly an error for *bi-ʿudhrin minka* (all other sources).

13 Reading *ḥājiban* (ps.-Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥijāb*) instead of *jālisan* (*Mukhtaṣar*, *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, *Wāfī*) or *ḥābisan* (*Amālī*).

[416] 123 Aḥmad ibn [Abī] Ṭāhir[1]

Al-Tamīmī Aḥmad ibn al-Mundhir told me: I heard Aḥmad ibn Abī Ṭāhir say, "I recited to Abū Ḥukaymah[2] an elegy by me on my tool, including these two verses:[3]

> My prick is against me together with Time,
> so whom can I blame, whom can I reproach?
> The matter with my prick is this: it is raised to rise
> but it will not rise.[4]

Abū Ḥukaymah said, 'I swear to God, in this topic I have no peer; I have been unique among all people in this field. But I pledge to God, and He may hold me to it, that I shall never say anything more on this theme after this!' " Ibn Abī Ṭāhir continued, "After this, Abū Tammām would say to me, 'You, who made Abū Ḥukaymah repent of his wretchedness, how are you?' "

Ibn Abī Ṭāhir is the one who said,[5]

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1 The parenthesis is added by the editor from the *Mukhtaṣar*. Abū l-Faḍl Aḥmad ibn Abī Ṭāhir Ṭayfūr (d. 280/893), of Iranian descent, born in Baghdad in 204/819, was a prolific prose writer and anthologist as well as a minor poet. He is the author of numerous works, some of which are partially preserved and edited, such as *Balāghāt al-nisā'*, on eloquent women (part of his anthology of prose and poetry, *al-Manthūr wa-l-manẓūm*), and one volume of his book on Baghdad (*Kitāb Baghdād*, covering the reign of al-Ma'mūn). Not attached to a court or prominent patrons, he was in a sense an "independent scholar" and man of letters. He has entries in Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, i, 451–453; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, v, 345; Yāqūt, *Mu'jam al-udabā'*, iii, 87–98; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, vii, 8–10; see also *EI2*, iii, 692–693 (F. Rosenthal); *EAL*, 306–307 (R.A. Kimber); *GAS*, i, 348–349, ii, 614, xvi, 212–214, 325–327; xvii, 98–99; Cooperson & Toorawa (eds), *Arabic Literary Culture*, 141–149 (Shawkat M. Toorawa), and the monograph by Toorawa, *Ibn Abī Ṭāhir Ṭayfūr and Arabic Writerly Culture* (see pp. 35–43 on Ibn Abī Ṭāhir the poet; see 36–37 for another translation of the present section).

2 See above, §104. Toorawa has "Abū Ḥakīmah" (giving "Abū Ḥukaymah" as alternative, p. 114 n. 7).

3 Al-Rāghib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ii, 161 (vs. 1, attributed to "Ibn Shabābah", possibly meaning Ibn Sayābah).

4 I attempt to imitate the *figura etymologica*, a play on the root *QWM*: *yuqawwamu li-l-qiyāmi fa-lā yaqūmū*.

5 The verse is about wine, drinking of which makes one unstable. It is found in a Bacchic poem by Abū Tammām (*Dīwān*, iv, 520) and is attributed to him in al-Āmidī, *Muwāzanah*, iii, 606; al-'Askarī, *Dīwān al-ma'ānī*, i, 326; al-Rāghib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, i, 424; and some later sources. The "grudge" is explained by the preceding verse in Abū Tammām's *Dīwān*: "When he tastes it (and wine is life!), you see him | glower, like someone brought forward to be killed". This motif is often found and shows that the wine at the time was drunk for its effect rather than its taste.

If the hand takes it with a grudge, it will patiently bear
this grudge; then it will take vengeance on the foot.

This verse has been transmitted in a poem by Abū Tammām, but it is by Ibn Abī Ṭāhir.

His poetry is so famous among both the elite and the common people that there is no need to quote it in this book of ours. He also wrote several books on various branches of *adab*,[6] historical reports, and battle days, which have reached east and west.

"He is more insufferable (*athqal*) than the first glass", quoted as a proverb in al-Thaʿālibī, *Khāṣṣ al-khāṣṣ fī l-amthāl*, 212.

6 Toorawa translates *adab* here as "literature" and indeed many titles listed by Ibn al-Nadīm and others are about poetry, poets, and literary topics. There are some that may be on ethics (see GAS, xvii, 98–99); good behaviour is also among the meanings of *adab*.

[417] **124 al-Baṣrī, Called Abū Ḥafṣ**[1]

Muḥammad ibn Ḥabīb told me: We were discussing poets with al-Mubarrad.
{198} He said to me, "I don't know ‖ anyone in Baghdad except Abū Ḥafṣ." I saw him a few days afterward and I said, "I heard[2] that you think much of the poetry of Abū Ḥafṣ al-Baṣrī. Why is that?" He replied, "Because of all his sound poetry, which is free of exaggeration and without confusion. He composed, didn't he, these verses:[3]

One cannot find fault with God's blessings, but
sometimes some people deem them ugly.
Wealth is not proper for the face of Ibn Yaʿlā,
no, nor the light of the splendour of benefaction.[4]
He is filthy of dress, turban, packhorse,
the saddle under him, and bridle."

He also said:[5]

Strongholds have been built by people who have no strongholds,
their womenfolk being protected by fees and guards.
Ibn al-Barādhīn has a house without ancient pedigree
that is protected by his sword, lance, and horse.[6]

1 This obscure poet has entries in Ibn al-Najjār, *Dhayl Tārīkh Baghdād*, v, 10, and al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xxii, 410–411, where he is called ʿUmar ibn Ibrāhīm ibn ʿUmar ibn Ḥabīb Abū Ḥafṣ al-ʿAdawī al-Baṣrī, grandson of a judge in Basra, but active in Samarra as a poet of panegyric and invective poetry.

2 *Balaghanī* is slightly odd here, since it suggests that Muḥammad ibn Ḥabīb heard about al-Mubarrad's statement from someone else.

3 Quoted in the entries by Ibn al-Najjār and al-Ṣafadī (with a fourth verse); attributed to al-ʿAṭawī (see above, §108; was there perhaps an oral-aural confusion with al-ʿAdawī?) in al-Wāḥidī, *Sharḥ Dīwān al-Mutanabbī*, 353, ps.-al-ʿUkbarī, *Sharḥ Dīwān Abī l-Ṭayyib*, ii, 370; attributed to Ibn al-Ḥajjāj in Waṭwāṭ, *Ghurar*, 74; anonymously in Ibn Dāwūd al-Iṣbahānī, *Zahrah*, 631; al-Thaʿālibī, *Nathr al-naẓm*, 111; al-Nawājī, *Ḥalbat al-kumayt*, 25; vs. 1 anonymously in al-Tawḥīdī, *Mathālib*, 210. The identity of Ibn Yaʿlā (or Abū Yaʿlā, as in *Wāfī*, or Abū Yaʿlā al-Kātib al-Qurashī, as in *Ḥalbat al-kumayt*) is unknown. Al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xxii, 410 identifies him as the vizier ʿUbayd Allāh ibn Yaḥyā ibn Khāqān (whose teknonym was Abū l-Ḥasan, not Abū Yaʿlā).

4 Instead of *inʿām*, "benefaction", all other sources mentioned before have *islām*.

5 Not found elsewhere.

6 Ibn al-Barādhīn, rather than a name, may be a slur: "son of packhorses" (cf. the packhorse in the preceding epigram), but the verse does not read as invective.

125 al-Nāshiʾ[1]

His name is ʿAbd Allāh ibn Muḥammad and his teknonym is Abū l-ʿAbbās. Ayyūb ibn ʿUmar al-Anṣārī told me: Abū l-ʿAbbās al-Nāshiʾ and a number of his friends came together to drink in some pleasure ground. With them was a singing-girl who was good. One of the men proposed that she might sing the song that begins "Pass round the wine, you two! I must …"[2] ‖ The singer had [418] a good voice; she sang excellently, and everyone in the gathering proposed a song to her,[3] until most of the day had passed. Then Abū l-ʿAbbās said, "You have gone too far! But I say:[4]

You acted as judge but you were unjust,
foolishly; you spoke but you did not act.
You left me and made the grudgers gloat;
you were worried about the censure of the censurers.
Now if[5] I do not have a good wine in the morning,
decanted mixed with cool, fresh water …!

1 Abū l-ʿAbbās ʿAbd Allāh ibn Muḥammad (d. 293/906), known as Ibn Shirshīr and also as al-Nāshiʾ (sometimes written as al-Nāshī) al-Akbar or al-Nāshiʾ al-Kabīr ("the Older"), to distinguish him from the poet ʿAlī ibn ʿAbd Allāh ibn Waṣīf (d. 365/975 or a year later), who was known as al-Nāshiʾ al-Aṣghar ("the Younger"), on whom see *GAS*, ii, 591. Al-Nāshiʾ al-Akbar, from al-Anbār, was active mainly in Baghdad but went to Egypt in or before 280/893. He was probably alive when Ibn al-Muʿtazz wrote his *Ṭabaqāt*. Ibn al-Muʿtazz apparently does not find it necessary to mention that al-Nāshiʾ, apart from being a poet, was a state secretary, a grammarian, and a theologian, of the "rationalist" (Muʿtazilite or Murjiʾite) school. His books are preserved only in quotations. He is said to have composed a very long poem on the sciences. Some verses about the art of poetry are quoted by al-Ḥuṣrī, *Zahr*, 685–687, Ibn Rashīq, *ʿUmdah*, ii, 113–117, and Ibn Khaldūn (who thinks they are by Ibn Rashīq), *Muqaddimah*, 1299–1302, tr. Rosenthal, iii, 386–391. On his theology, see e.g. van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft*, iv, 141–146. He has entries in al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, iv, 337–338; Abū l-Ṭayyib al-Lughawī, *Marātib*, 157; Ibn al-Nadīm, *Fihrist*, i, 604–605 (in the section on theologians); al-Qifṭī, *Inbāh*, ii, 128–129; al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh*, xi, 297–299; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, iii, 91–93; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xvii, 522–525. See also *GAS*, ii, 564–566, ix, 301, xvi, 40; *EI2*, vii, 975 (J. van Ess).

2 The MS has *Urīdu askaru l-yawma lā budda lī* ("I must get drunk today; I must") and the *Mukhtaṣar* has *urīdu ashrabu l-yawma lā budda lī* ("I must drink today; I must"). As Farrāj says, neither is metrically sound, and he has emended it (*wa-lā budda* …) in accordance with vs. 8 of the following poem (but *udīra/udīru* must be corrected to *adīrā*, as in the poem).

3 Read *iqtaraḥahā* as in the MS, not *iqtaraḥahū*.

4 Not found elsewhere.

5 The apodosis of this conditional sentence seems to be missing.

A vintage wine: though its rule is to lead me astray,
I shall walk on the straightest path.
When a noble man is inebriated with a cup of it,
it incites him to the most virtuous morals.
You may see how the last of the men is made to join
the first, led by the drinking companions' hands.
He who is accustomed to it is led to doing good;
he gives much without being asked.
Pass round the wine, you two! I must
get drunk with it; I make no excuse,
Now that they have announced it is time to depart.
So, girl, though you used to love me, depart!"

When the girl heard this verse, her heart was aflame with fire. She fell in love with him, and he with her. She got up, put on her clothes when she saw her mistress was unaware, and left with him. Al-Nāshiʾ kept her at his place for one month, but then he returned her.

126 Muḥammad ibn ʿArūs al-Shīrāzī[1]

He is these days the poet of his age. Muḥammad ibn ʿArūs wrote to Abū Bakr al-Fatā:[2]

> May God prolong your life, most marvellous ‖ king and lush Spring! That [419]
> God the most high and exalted has chosen you means a lofty degree, a
> happy ‖ fortune, exalted ambition, a far-reaching aim, and a beautiful {199}
> sign. For that, to God is due extended praise and continued great gratitude. Your support is for the religion of Islam, your efforts are for the community of believers, your endeavours are for benefaction, your labours are for glory, your protection is for the vizierate, your good-will is for the dynasty, your compassion is for the weak. You hold fast unto justice and thus, praise be to God, the religion is strengthened and protected, and worldly matters look verdant through you. After God, you are the only one who is to be asked and on whom can be relied. You—may God strengthen you!—have not been shown any virtue (?)[3] and I have not been given any means. You have not been given any favour and I have not been given any respect.[4] You have not been given a reputation and I have not been given a

1 The MS incorrectly has Muḥammad ibn Abī ʿArūs. He is Abū ʿAlī Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿArūs al-Kātib al-Shīrāzī. Presumably from Shiraz, he lived in Samarra, see Ibn Shākir, *Fawāt*, iii, 260–261 and al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, i, 128–129, who give verses by him on Abū l-ʿAynāʾ and an anecdote about him and ʿAlī ibn al-Jahm. He died in 280/893–894 (*Fawāt*) or in the 280s (*Wāfī*). Al-Marzubānī, *Muʿjam*, 389 calls him Muḥammad ibn ʿArūs al-Kātib al-Shīrāzī, quoting some verses exchanged between him and the vizier ʿAbd Allāh ibn Muḥammad ibn Yazdād (d. 261/874–875, see al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xvii, 494–495), whom he served as a secretary. An anecdote in al-ʿAskarī, *Dīwān al-maʿānī*, ii, 228 describes him in the company of al-Nāshiʾ, Aḥmad ibn Abī Ṭāhir, and a singing-girl. He has an entry in GAS, ii, 621–622. Ibn al-Muʿtazz's entry is a rare exception in lacking the usual *ḥaddathanī* with the name of an informant.

2 The letter uses *sajʿ* (rhyming prose) only intermittently. It has not been found elsewhere; both the prose and the poetry present some problems and obscurities, beginning with the addressee, Abū Bakr al-Fatā ("the Young Man"). All that is known about him is that he is mentioned as being the nephew (*ibn ukht*) of Ismāʿīl ibn Bulbul (d. 278/892), the vizier of Caliph al-Muʿtamid, see al-Masʿūdī (attrib.), *Ithbāt al-waṣiyyah*, 251; in Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tārīkh*, xiii, 88 he is called the secretary and relative of al-Ḥasan ibn Makhlad (on whom see below, p. 628 note 14).

3 Tentative interpretation of *lam tuʾta min faḍīlah*, which seems to mean "you have not been given any virtue/excellence", but this does not make sense. Perhaps *faḍīlah* here means "favour, boon" (cf. Kazimirski, *Dictionnaire*: "Grâce, faveur, bienfait"), as suggested by Nefeli Papoutsakis (personal communication).

4 This and the following are also obscure. It is not clear, moreover, why the words *min ḥurmah* are between square brackets in Farrāj's edition; they are in the MS.

means of subsistence. Here I am—May God support you! One must not be ungrateful to God the most high and exalted, nor find His days move too slowly, nor blame His benefaction (our Lord be hallowed and glorified!)—Here I am in Baghdad, but for my hopes in you, like a bird alighting in a barren wasteland without salubrious and copious water to quench its thirst and restore it. The signs pointing at you, together with trust in God, directed my riding animals towards you. My old wife—may God guard her by means of the good order of your days and the completion of your good fortune!—harassed me towards you, and your lordship over the kings of the earth pointed me to you. The opportunity, if missed, will not be caught again in all eternity and for all time. The feast of Mihrajān and he who celebrates it are looming,[5] my letters do not arrive, my status with them is not honoured, and I am staying in this state like one who travels in a desert without provision or camel. Therefore I say:

A man for whom you have become the door to his expectation
and who has not gained worldly goods is indeed unlucky.
A man who has braved mountains and has had to tread
steep mountain roads[6] until arriving at you has done his utmost.
And a man who has not crossed the sea turning
to you, even if he has acquired wealth,[7] truly has fallen short.
O adornment of this world, through a father, birth, uncles maternal
and paternal! Which of your two states deserves more gratitude:
[420] The protection of God's religion against everyone who hates it,
or the generosity with worldly goods? Of both one can be proud.
I complain unto God and the Vizier: I am humiliated
in Baghdad, though it is early Spring;[8]
Being left unemployed[9] day and night,
without protection against the devil's threatening temptations. (?)[10]

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5 *Al-Mihrajān wa-ṣāḥibuhū shākhiṣān*; perhaps a reference to the vizier. On *Mihrajān*, the autumn feast, see above, p. 391.

6 I do not know why Farrāj and al-Ṭabbāʿ read *al-ʿuqāb* ("eagle" or "Aquila"); I read *al-ʿiqāb* (pl. of *ʿaqabah*).

7 Perhaps instead of *wa-law nāla l-ghinā* one should read *wa-lā nāla l-ghinā* ("and has not gained wealth"), parallel with vs. 1.

8 Reading, with Farrāj, *mubakkir* as in the *Mukhtaṣar* instead of *mubaṭṭ.r* (but I fail to see the relevance of mentioning the time of year).

9 Perhaps instead of *muqīman ʿalā l-taʿṭīl* one should read, with the *Mukhtaṣar*, *muqīman ʿalā l-taṭfīl*, "persisting in being a parasite".

10 I do not understand either the MS (*bi-lā ʿūdhatin shayṭānuhā yatanammarū*, "without a

I am from Rabīʿah and Wāʾil, with ancestors whose glory
has been affirmed by ʿAkk and Ḥimyar.[11]
My kinship did not avail me one bit, it did not cure my ills,
nor does my constitution thrive under your protection.
Here I am, with my kinship, jaded, humiliated,
and you being who you are—this is truly horrible!
Even if I hailed from the lowlands of Tihāmah[12] my ruination
would not be necessary to you, when close kinship is mentioned.
When you do not go beyond what you can do
they will say, "A noble man is excused."
One of the shining signs of the vizierate is what he does
to someone like me; or else it is a false regime.[13]

The day had not passed before the addressee sent him hundred dinars, a brisk riding animal, and clothes.

Among his good poetry is the following, [from a poem on Ṣāʿid ibn Makhlad:[14]

When I made you run with noble horses,[15] testing you,
they came first and you came together with your dog, sitting down.
Take it easy! Even if July clothed you with its robe
you would, I swear, still be cold.[16]]

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charm the devil of which is angry like a tiger") or the *Mukhtaṣar* (*bi-lā daʿwatin shayṭānuhā yatadhammarū*, "without an invitation the devil of which is grumbling").

11 Rabīʿah is presumably Rabīʿah ibn Nizār, a major branch of the Northern Arabs, and ancestor of Wāʾil, to which a group of tribes belong. ʿAkk and Ḥimyar are ancient branches of the Southern Arabs; it is not clear why they are singled out here.

12 Tihāmah is the southwestern coastal area of the Arabian Peninsula. For the dual in the Arabic (*min ghawray Tihāmata*) compare the rhymed prose of an Arab addressing the Prophet (e.g. Ibn al-Athīr, *Mathal*, i, 231: *ataynāka yā rasūl Allāh min ghawray Tihāmata* …).

13 Reading, with Farrāj, *fa-hwa mulkun muzawwarū*; alternatively, one could read *fa-hwa malkun muzawwarū*, "he is a false king" (*malk* being a variant of *malik*; the addressee is addressed as "king" at the beginning of the letter).

14 The bracketed passage is from the *Mukhtaṣar* (ed. Farrāj, Appendix, 460–461). Vss. 2–3, with another verse, are in Ibn Aflaḥ, *Muqaddimah* (van Gelder, *Two Arabic Treatises*, 56 = Ibn Aflaḥ, *Badīʿ*, ed. Ṣāliḥ, 166). The vizier Ṣāʿid ibn Makhlad was apparently not a brother of al-Ḥasan ibn Makhlad, see *EI2*, iii, 859, "Ibn Makhlad" (D. Sourdel). The interpretation of the verses remains obscure.

15 *Jiyād*, "noble horses" also means "generous men".

16 *Bārid*, i.e., "boring, dull, insipid, stupid".

Did you think that the rope of the realm would be thrown
into your hands, or that you had charged Ṣāʿid with your affairs?

It is a long and beautiful poem. In fact, all his poetry is good, but if we quoted
{200} ‖ all his poems exhaustively our book would be overlong. God is He whom one
asks for help.

127[1] ʿInān, the Slave Girl of al-Nāṭifī[2] [421]

[Among the poetry by ʿInān that is admired is the following poem, in which she mentions the kindness of Yaḥyā ibn Khālid to two sisters of hers, asking him to be joined with them:[3]

The weaving of odes banished sleep from my eyes;
worrying about the hopes of my soul will never end.

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1 The following six sections, concluding the text, are all about female poets. Three of these, on ʿInān (§ 127), Sakan (§ 128), and ʿĀʾishah al-ʿUthmāniyyah (§ 129), are not found in the MS but are in the *Mukhtaṣar*. Following Farrāj, I have incorporated them in the text (between square brackets) rather than as an appendix. Five of the six women poets are *jawārī* or *imāʾ*, "slave girls/women", often trained as *qiyān* (singers and musicians), often erudite and accomplished poets. On them see Kilpatrick, "Women as Poets and Chattels"; Stigelbauer, *Die Sängerinnen*; Caswell, *The Slave Girls of Baghdad*; Gordon and Hain (eds), *Concubines and Courtesans*; Gökpınar, *Höfische Musikkultur*.

2 ʿInān grew up in al-Yamāmah and was owned by Abū Khālid al-Nāṭifī (or al-Naṭṭāf), who raised her and took her to Baghdad. She was a *muwalladah* (of mixed Arab and non-Arab descent); in a late source (Ibn al-Sāʿī, *Nisāʾ*) she is called ʿInān bint ʿAbd Allāh (but this is perhaps a way of saying that her father was an unknown Muslim). Her name means "Rein" or "Bridle" (the editors/translators of Ibn al-Sāʿī's *Nisāʾ* prefer "Restraint"). She was erudite, witty, and a good poet who mixed with other poets; she was "the centre of a literary circle (…) Her house was frequented by the most brilliant people, notably those of the famous group of 'libertines'" (Bencheikh, in *EI2*, iii, 1202). It is a paradox of the *jawārī* ("slave women" or "concubines") and the *qiyān* ("singing girls", the two categories overlap) that in practice they were often much freer than "free" women. ʿInān (who does not suffer from "restraint" in her poetry) is famous for her association with Abū Nuwās (see his *Dīwān*, i, 80–88 for their at times bawdy exchanges; also Wagner, *Abū Nuwās*, 162–166). It is told that Hārūn al-Rashīd was about to buy her, but drew back after Abū Nuwās, at the instigation of the Caliph's wife, composed a few lewd verses on her (*Aghānī*, xxiii, 93). It is said that she died either in Egypt or Khorasan in 226/841. She has entries in Ibn al-Jarrāḥ, *Waraqah*, 42–45; Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih, *ʿIqd*, vi, 57–60; *Aghānī*, xxiii, 84–93; Abū l-Faraj al-Iṣbahānī, *Imāʾ*, 25–45; al-Nashshābī, *Mudhākarah*, 235–240; Ibn al-Sāʿī, *Nisāʾ al-khulafāʾ* (ed. Jawād), 47–53, (ed. & tr. Toorawa et al.), 10–19; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xxiii, 365–374; Ibn Faḍl Allāh, *Masālik* (ed. Khashabah), x, 348–350; al-Suyūṭī, *Mustaẓraf*, 38–46; see also *EI2*, iii, 1202–1203 (J.E. Bencheikh); *GAS*, ii, 623; Caswell, *Slave Girls*, 56–81; Myrne, "A *Jariya*'s Prospect".

3 For Yaḥyā ibn Khālid al-Barmakī see above, p. 67. The poem dates from before the fall of the Barmakids in 187/803. It is quoted (vss. 1–3, 5, 11, 6–8, 10, 13–14, with an additional final verse) in al-Nashshābī, *Mudhākarah*, 336, with a different introduction: Yaḥyā ibn Khālid gave al-Rashīd a *jāriyah* of ʿAwf the Taylor (al-Khayyāṭ). She stayed with him for a month, after which he passed her on to Khuzaymah ibn Khāzim. Then ʿInān composed her poem, praising Yaḥyā and asking him to buy her. The poem, however, speaks of "two sisters" (vs. 13). For another translation of the poem see Caswell, *The Slave Girls*, 78–80.

But when slumber is banished from my eyes by a long night,
I use Yaḥyā ibn Khālid's name as a charm against it.
The Vizier of the Commander of the Believers, who has
two ways of being praised: one newly got, one inherited;
One of the Barmakids, whose faces
are lamps that with their light extinguish every burning fire.
On Yaḥyā's face there is a blaze by which one is guided
just as a nightly traveller in the dark is guided by Polaris.[4]
His custom is to do good, righting what is wrong;
Yaḥyā never stops righting every wrong.
The necks of men were unadorned,
but then Yaḥyā hung on them noble necklaces.
Every living being enjoys a blessing from his favours,
his works are praised in every gathering.
Your[5] basins of beneficence to people are many;
people come and go, to drink from them.
Your deeds are praiseworthy, your hand is a mercy,
your face is a light that is never dimmed.
You have reached the like of what other people never reach;
you are placed as the hand of every arm.
Lord, increase him in blessing and noble-heartedness,
to anger his enemies and to spite any denier.[6]
[422] You have been kind to my two sisters,
which turned limpid the sweet waters they drink.
Now favour me with what you bestowed on those two,
may the God of people guard you against the scheming of
schemers![7]]

4 In Arabic, *al-Farqadān*, "the Two Calves", in the West known as Pherkad and Kochab (from Arabic *kawkab*, "star"), two bright stars in Ursa Minor, near Polaris, the North Star.

5 Such an apostrophe (*iltifāt*, "turning") from the 3rd to the 2nd person is common in panegyric poems.

6 Farrāj suggests that *jāḥid* may be a corruption of *ḥāsid*, "envier".

7 *Mudhākarah* reports the sequel: Yaḥyā mentions her to Hārūn, who decides to buy her for 300,000 dirhams, to be taken from the treasury. The treasurer, however, refuses, finding the price exorbitant; he shows the purses to the Caliph, who is taken aback and rescinds the purchase. Later, Yaḥyā brings up the matter again, but due to the "event" that befalls them (the fall of the Barmakids) it comes to nothing.

128 Sakan, the Slave Girl of Maḥmūd al-Warrāq[1]

[Ja'far ibn 'Awn told me: One of the Ṭāhirids offered Maḥmūd two hundred thousand dirhams for Sakan, but Maḥmūd refused to sell her. She had secretly sent a messenger to al-Mu'taṣim, asking him to buy her, but al-Mu'taṣim tore up her letter. Then she said:[2]

Why is it that the messenger brings me despair from you?
After my hopes you brought the harshness of a hard-hearted one.
Even supposing you had, in your injustice, imputed a crime to me,
yet what moved you to tear up my note?
You, who followed up wrong with wrong as you please, let me have
your good will, wholeheartedly!
I love you dearly, not indecently;
there is nothing wrong, in God's eyes, with love!
Say to one who joins a man in sensual pleasures,
addicted to the wine-cup, sipping from it with him:
When the Imam betakes himself to a place
he brings to it prosperity and affability.
Do you not see how the first shoots of the seedling have appeared, [423]
the stems with verdant tops, clad in leaf?
Thus Samarra has become the abode of sovereignty,[3]
laid out between rivers and plantations.
You who plant myrtle and rose to be plucked there:
what the Imam plants are not roses and myrtle!

1 On Sakan (her name could be translated as "Comfort") and Maḥmūd, see the section on the latter, above (§ 91) and the references given there. See also *GAS*, ii, 624, Caswell, *The Slave Girls*, 123–131 (with translation and discussion of the poem).

2 Al-Mu'taṣim reigned as Caliph 218–227/833–842. The other sources that quote the following poem (al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xv, 290–291, al-Suyūṭī, *Mustaẓraf*, 29–30) have a slightly different introduction: "Ibn al-Mu'tazz says: Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Maymūn told me: When Maḥmūd wanted to sell her, she sent a petition to al-Mu'taṣim, asking him to buy her. But when he saw her petition he tore it up and threw it away, because at one time he had wanted to buy her, but she had refused. Then Sakan said on this …" Vss. 18–19 are found in Aydamir, *Durr*, vii, 229–230, followed by eight more verses; the poem is attributed to 'Inān; see Ullmann, *Das Motiv der Kreuzigung*, 47–54, where the two versions are combined as a poem of 27 vss., with a German translation and commentary.

3 It was al-Mu'taṣim who in 221/836 moved the residence of the court from Baghdad to Samarra, on which see above, p. 267. In the poem it is called by its official name, Surra Man Rā, "Pleased are Those who See", a playful corruption of Sāmarrā.

He has planted every rebellious, despicable,
thick-armed, audacious, big-bodied man,
Such as Bābak and his brother, when he raised for them
a cutting sword that snatches limb and neck.[4]
The one is erected on the bridge for the eyes to behold,
the other in Samarra, high on a firmly planted pole.
It is thus—and it has always been—how we know
the planting of the caliphs of the Abbasids.
Those two had rebelled against the religion, deluded in their ignorance,
with a band famous for warfare and power;
They tried to undermine the sovereignty of the Imam, but lions
of the thickets stood—well they knew—between them and sovereignty,
Under the auspices of one who firmly professes the religion, who holds fast
to the Truth,[5] a vanquisher of the thick-necked and a predator.
Defending him stood what would choke them, sticking in their throats:
such as the blessed Afshīn and Ashnās.[6]
Do you not see Bābak, set up high in the air
on an object neatly put together, shaped by the axe?
His dwelling is between heaven and earth,
between standing and sitting, without head.]

4 Bābak (Persian Pāpak) was the leader of the Khurramī movement or sect (founded by Mazdak in the 5th century AD). They rebelled several times against Arab and Muslim domination, notably and protractedly under Bābak, spreading from Azerbaijan, from 201/816 to 223/838, when Bābak was finally defeated, executed with extreme cruelty, and crucified in Samarra, which prompted the arboreal imagery (the cross as a tree) exploited here and in several other poems on the event (see Ullmann, *Das Motif der Kreuzigung*, *passim*). Bābak's brother suffered the same fate soon afterwards.

5 *Muʿtaṣimin | bi-l-ḥaqqi*; the Caliph's full regnal name is al-Muʿtaṣim bi-llāh, "He who holds fast to God" (cf. Q al-Nisāʾ 4:146: *Hold fast to God!*). *Al-Ḥaqq*, "Truth", often means "God".

6 Afshīn was the title of the princes of Ushrūshanah (a region east of Samarqand); in Arabic sources it is used as the proper name of Khaydhār (or Ḥaydar), who defeated the Khurrāmīs and Bābak. A few years later he was himself accused of rebelling and he died in prison in 226/841. Ashnās, also read as Ashinās (d. 230/844), was a powerful Turkish general.

129 ʿĀʾishah al-ʿUthmāniyyah[1]

[Al-Asadī Abū l-Qāsim said: I saw ʿĀʾishah al-ʿUthmāniyyah riding a noble red camel, fighting fiercely in one of the wars of the Ṭālibids. She attacked squadrons and dispersed them. She lived in Mecca and was a Shi'ite.[2] I have never seen a young woman with a prettier face or more ‖ intelligent than she, and she [424]
was one of the best poets, one of the most eloquent people, and the purest of language. Moreover, she was witty, full of anecdotes and pleasantries. She was naturally gifted and proficient. She really played with poetry[3] and also set it to music. She owned much wealth and many slaves. She distributed her wealth among the Ṭālibids, equipping their armies and strengthening their cause. She went out to war herself, fighting vigorously to defend them. She was one of the bravest people. She fought in more than one battle and in numerous locations, killing many people. She composed poetry on each battle. A fine poem by her is the following:[4]

1 Nothing is known from other sources about this remarkable ʿĀʾishah. Although she is called a *jāriyah* in the entry, the little that is told about her makes it clear that *jāriyah* does not mean "slave girl" or "concubine" here. Her *nisbah* remains unexplained; she may have been descended from someone of that name (e.g. ʿUthmān ibn Khalaf, who fought with ʿAlī at the Battle of the Camel), or she may have belonged to the tribe of ʿUthmān ibn ʿAmr, a branch of Muzaynah (which resided south of Medina). Perhaps Mecca was rather too remote from Baghdad and Samarra and too provincial to interest the literati in her.

2 A woman called ʿĀʾishah fighting on a camel: one is naturally reminded of ʿĀʾishah, the widow of the Prophet, who famously attended a battle seated on a camel (see above, p. 57). She was an opponent of ʿAlī and is therefore not popular with Shi'ites, followers of the Ṭālibids (descendants of ʿAlī's father Abū Ṭālib). One even wonders whether the present ʿĀʾishah was perhaps made up as a "super-ʿĀʾishah", as a Shi'ite counterpart to ʿĀʾishah bint Abī Bakr. Her poem, however, seems to refer to actual events.

3 The same is said about Bashshār and Abū l-ʿAtāhiyah, see above, pp. 49 and 327.

4 The poem, like ʿĀʾishah, herself, is not known from other sources. The few concrete details it offers make it likely that it describes the disturbances in 251/865, when Ismāʿīl ibn Yūsuf ibn Ibrāhīm (a descendant of ʿAlī) attacked Mecca, killing many people, plundering the town, and setting fire to part of it (vs. 3). See al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, iii, 1644–1645, Ibn al-Jawzī, *Muntaẓam*, xii, 50. Ismāʿīl subsequently attacked Jedda, the town that serves as the port of Mecca, which explains the mention of boats (vs. 7) that looks odd at first sight. He died of the plague or smallpox the following year. Abū l-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī, *Maqātil*, 524 reluctantly lists him (*karihtu dhikrahū*). An eyewitness such as al-Asadī Abū l-Qāsim could have informed Ibn al-Muʿtazz. If this was indeed the event to which the poem refers, it would seem that ʿĀʾishah was not on the side of the attacker, even though he was a Ṭālibid and she a Shi'ite. He was the brother of Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf al-Ukhayḍir, the founder of an ʿAlid dynasty in al-Yamāmah (see *EI2*, x, 792, "al-Ukhayḍir, Banū" [W. Madelung]).

I was sleepless when lightning flashed in Mecca,
its light appearing and disappearing repeatedly.
I spent the night tossing and turning on my bed,
weeping openly and weeping secretly,
For the Mother of Towns, destroyed by burning,
where people died by the sword and by fire.
To God is my complaint about enemies residing
in Mecca, having besieged it,
And about captives, their hands cut off;
they died in rows[5] and they died in fear.
Some patiently surrendered to their unhappy fate,
others, fearful, fled as if flying.
Some betook themselves to boats,
traversing the dark and plunging into the sea.
O town! You were the refuge of the weak
when they did not find anywhere else to stay;
A refuge for a stranger or for someone from nearby,
a place of safety, night and day!
I shall weep for Quraysh, because of what befell them,
which gave them fear instead, in house after house.
They are dispersed, straying as fugitives,
dwelling among mountains, dwelling in wastelands.
Chastisement has fallen upon the neighbours of Your House,
though those who were neighbours to God were once mighty!]

5 Thus Farrāj's text (*ṣufūfan*); he suggests it could be *ḥutūfan* ("deaths"). The *Mukhtaṣar* seems to have *ṣunūfan* ("kinds").

130 Khansāʾ, the Slave Girl of Hishām the Blind (*al-Makfūf*[1]

[425] {200, cont.}

ʿAbd Allāh ibn Muḥammad al-Yaḥṣubī told me: Khansāʾ, the slave girl of Hishām the Blind was honourable, noble, intelligent, erudite, a poet, surpassingly beautiful, one of the skilful and proficient singers. She was involved in contests with male poets and composed panegyrics on caliphs. Hishām was offered a hefty sum for her, but he said, "I swear to God, even if I was offered the land tax of the Sawād[2] I would not sell her. What should I do with the money, when my enjoyment of her for one day is worth more than all treasures and more enjoyable than anything?"

Among the verses by her that we have memorised are the following, on Abū l-Shibl the poet, in which she lampoons him:[3]

I cannot stop being amazed by or thinking of
a ewe called Abū l-Shibl.
Males toy with her slit and her perineum;
she bares herself when a male bares himself.
[Say to him: "Son of a donkey, can't you see
in your stinking hide[4] the characteristics of a mule?"]
When you styled yourself as you did,[5]
and described that shortcoming as a virtue,
The earth almost shook from shock
and you could see the sky melting *like molten copper*.[6]

1 Khansāʾ, the slave girl of Hishām al-Makfūf ("the Blind"), is mentioned in *Aghānī*, xix, 308–309 as being lampooned by Faḍl al-Shāʿirah (on whom see below, § 132) and replying in kind. She has an entry in al-Suyūṭī, *Mustaẓraf*, 20. She seems to be identical with "Khansāʾ the slave girl of al-Barmakī" who has entries in al-Iṣbahānī, *Imāʾ*, 153–155 and, as "Khansāʾ al-Barmakiyyah" in Ibn Faḍl Allāh, *Masālik* (ed. Khashabah), x, 382–385, where the verses quoted by Ibn al-Muʿtazz are found. Perhaps Hishām the Blind is identical with "al-Barmakī", who is said to have belonged to the family of Yaḥyā ibn Khālid al-Barmakī (*Imāʾ*, *Masālik*). Al-Khansāʾ ("Snub-nose") was the nickname by which her more famous predecessor was known (her *ism* was Tumāḍir), but in this case Khansāʾ (without the article) was her real name.

2 Al-Sawād, "the black land", is the arable region between the Euphrates and the Tigris in Iraq.

3 On Abū l-Shibl see above, § 98. Vss. 1–2, 4–5 are quoted in *Aghānī*, xix, 309, Ibn Faḍl Allāh, *Masālik*, x, 384. Vs. 3, taken from the *Mukhtaṣar* (ed. Farrāj, Appendix, 461), is not found elsewhere.

4 Translation of *fī l-ʿaṭni* uncertain.

5 I follow the version of *Aghānī and Masālik*: *lammā ktanayta bi-mā ktanayta bihī*, instead of the unmetrical *lammā ktanayta Abā Shiblin* of the MS. Abū l-Shibl literally means "Father of the lion cub".

6 Q al-Maʿārij 70:8, on the Last Judgement: *On the day when the sky will be like molten copper*. *Aghānī* adds that Abū l-Shibl was angry; he did not respond with poetry on her but lampooned her master Hishām instead.

131 ʿArīb, the Slave Girl of al-Maʾmūn[1]

Aḥmad ibn Ḥammād al-Idrīsī told me: ʿArīb, the concubine of al-Maʾmūn, was,
[426] of all women, the one with the prettiest face, with the purest Arabic, ‖ the clearest eloquence, and the greatest skill on the lute.[2] She was a proficient, naturally gifted poet. [She[3] studied the works of poets, finding out their errors and mistakes, which she showed to al-Maʾmūn. She was one of the wittiest people and the quickest to come up with an amusing remark.] Al-Maʾmūn loved her when she was with her master, [Ibn al-Marākibī, about whom there is a story on her infatuation in her youthful days, which we have not recorded in our book because it is repulsive.][4] Among what we have memorised of her poetry are these verses:[5]

1 ʿArīb is probably the most famous among the *qiyān*, "singing girls" and *jawārī*, "slave girls" and one of the best poets among them. She composed many songs. She is said to have been the daughter of the Barmakid vizier Jaʿfar ibn Yaḥyā and one of his concubines or servants. After the downfall of the Barmakids, as a young girl, she ended up as being enslaved (as she should not have been). She was owned by al-Amīn and then his brother al-Maʾmūn (and she is therefore often called ʿArīb al-Maʾmūniyyah). She was freed by al-Maʾmūn's successor, al-Muʿtaṣim. She herself claimed to have had affairs with eight caliphs but to have loved only one, al-Muʿtazz (the father of the author). Her name may be translated as "Playful, Amorous" or "Loving one's husband"; the editors/translators of Ibn al-Sāʿī, *Nisāʾ* render it as "Ardent". She died, in her nineties, in 277/890; She has entries in *Aghānī*, xxi, 54–89; al-Iṣbahānī, *Imāʾ*, 107–120; Ibn al-Sāʿī, *Nisāʾ* (ed. Jawād), 55–63, (ed. & tr. Toorawa et al.), 24–31; Ibn Faḍl Allāh, *Masālik* (ed. Khashabah), 273–279; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xix, 553–557; al-Suyūṭī, *Mustaẓraf*, 36–37. See on her also Gordon, "'Arib al-Ma'muniyah", in Cooperson and Toorawa (eds), *Arabic Literary Culture, 500–925*, 85–90; idem, "the Place of Competition"; *EI3*, "'Arīb" (Suzanne M. Meyers Sawa); Caswell, *The Slave Girls*, 96–123 and *passim*; al-Samarai, *Die Macht der Darstellung*, 62–89, 105–120.

2 The lute is not in the Arabic but implied by *kaffan*, "(the most skilful) with her hand".

3 This and the following bracketed passage are from the *Mukhtaṣar* (ed. Farrāj, Appendix, 461).

4 Reading, with Eghbal and Farrāj, *ʿinda mawlāhā* instead of *ʿinda mawlātihā*, "with her mistress", as in the MS. ʿAbd Allāh ibn Ismāʿīl al-Marākibī owned her and trained her after the fall of the Barmakids. The story omitted for being "repulsive" (*li-shanāʿatihī*) is perhaps her elopement with her lover, a friend of her owner, see *Aghānī*, xxi, 61; Lauré, *Die Macht*, 66; Caswell, *The Slave Girls*, 99–102. Since elsewhere Ibn al-Muʿtazz is not averse to quoting matters that could be deemed "repulsive", one wonders if the expurgation is due to a copyist.

5 The verses are attributed to Caliph al-Manṣūr in al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj*, iv, 137 (English translation in Masʿudi, *Meadows*, 30–31). Vs. 1 is quoted anonymously in *Aghānī*, xi, 345, as sung by ʿAllūyah in the presence of Caliph al-Wāthiq.

He who has been in the company of Fate does not praise its dealings,
in the end.[6] Fate brings the sweet and the bitter.
Everything, however long it stays,
must be cut short when it comes to an end.

6 Adopting, with Farrāj, the reading *ghibban*, as in the *Mukhtaṣar*; the MS has *ʿyā* (?) and *Aghānī* has *ʿanan* (for *ʿanā*ʾ), "in distress"; *Murūj* has *yawman*, "one day".

132 Faḍl the Poet[1]

Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥārith al-Baghdādī[2] was a slave trader who was eminently erudite and charming. He had with him perhaps as many as one hundred thousand dinars' worth of slaves. He had dealings with caliphs and viziers. He told me: Faḍl the Poet was the summum of beauty and perfection, of eloquence, fluency, and poetic excellence. Literati used to gather at her place.[3] She composed many panegyrics on caliphs and leading personages. She was a Shi'ite, fervently siding with that sect. For the necessities of life she could rely on her standing and her status with leading persons and nobles. It is told about her that she was in love with Saʿīd ibn Ḥumayd, the state secretary.[4] Now Saʿīd was a fanatic[5] anti-Shi'ite, hostile to the family of the Messenger (may God preserve them), [and he could not bear to hear ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib (peace be upon him) being mentioned,][6] while Faḍl held extreme Shi'ite views. But when she fell in love with Saʿīd she converted to his belief and held to it until her death. After her death Saʿīd said, "All my letters, as recorded among people, are her compositions."[7]

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1 Faḍl al-Shāʿirah ("the female poet") was born in al-Yamāmah and raised in Basra. She became the property of al-Mutawakkil, who freed her. She died in 257/871 or 260/874. Her name, Faḍl, is also common as a man's name (then usually with the article, al-Faḍl). It may be translated variously as "merit, superiority, kindness, favour"; the translators of Ibn al-Sāʿī's *Nisāʾ* call her "Boon". "Among the women of her time no one was a better poet than she" (*Aghānī*, xix, 301). Some of her verses were set to music by ʿArīb. She excelled in quick repartee in verse and she exchanged some lively invective with Khansāʾ (*Aghānī*, xix, 308–309). She has entries in al-Iṣfahānī, *Aghānī*, xix, 300–313; idem, *Imāʾ*, 53–76; Ibn al-Sāʿī, *Nisāʾ* (ed. Jawād), 84–90, (ed. & tr. Toorawa et al.), 64–73; Ibn Faḍl Allāh, *Masālik* (ed. Khashabah), x, 351–356; Ibn Shākir, *Fawāt*, iii, 185–187; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xxiv, 75–78; al-Suyūṭī, *Mustaẓraf*, 50–55. See also *GAS*, ii, 623–624; *EI2*, *Suppl.*, 284 (E. Neubauer); *EAL*, 215 (H. Kilpatrick); Huart, "La poétesse Fadhl"; Caswell, *The Slave Girls*, 81–96.

2 He has not been identified. He was not the slave trader who owned Faḍl, called Ḥusnawayh (*Aghānī*, xix, 301, as vowelled there; perhaps one should read it as Ḥasanwayh). He sold her to Muḥammad ibn al-Faraj al-Rukhkhajī, who donated her to al-Mutawakkil.

3 Ibn Shākir, *Fawāt*, iii, 185: "Ibn al-Muʿtazz says, 'She composed lampoons on poets; literati used to gather at her place …'"

4 Abū ʿUthmān Saʿīd ibn Ḥumayd (death date unknown, but after Faḍl), of Persian descent, was a prominent *kātib* ("state secretary") and epistolographer, as well as a poet. He has an entry in *Aghānī*, xviii, 154–167, which contains several reports involving Faḍl. See on him *EI2*, viii, 856 (W.P. Heinrichs), *GAS*, ii, 583, xvi, 427–428.

5 *Ashadd al-nās naṣban*, i.e., rejecting ʿAlī as fourth Caliph and being hostile to the ʿAlids, see above, p. 581.

6 The parenthesis is from the *Mukhtaṣar* (ed. Farrāj, Appendix, 461).

7 For some letters by him, see Ṣafwat (ed.), *Jamharat rasāʾil al-ʿArab*, iv, 246–265.

She composed the following verses on Saʿīd ibn Ḥumayd:[8]

You with your beautiful face[9] and ugly behaviour! [427]
You've gone grey, though still a young man in your pleasures.[10]
Damn you! Singing girls are like a snare, {201}
set up between deception and lying.
They don't accost the poor;
they follow only goldmines.
While complaining to you, she[11] will move
from looking complaining to asking for something.
She looks at this one and that one, this one and that one,
looking like a lover but with an acquisitive eye.

The copying of *The Classes of the Modern Poets* by ʿAbd Allāh, son of al-Muʿtazz, Commander of the Believers, was completed on the sixth day of the month Shawwāl of the year 1285,[12] by the hand of Mahdī ibn ʿAlī Naqī al-Tibrīzī.

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8 Here Farrāj inserts "having been informed that he had fallen in love with a certain singing girl (*jāriyah min al-qiyān*)", apparently taken from *Aghānī*, xviii, 166, where these verses are quoted, as they are in al-Washshāʾ, *Muwashshā*, 86; al-Iṣbahānī, *Imāʾ*, 76; al-Nashshābī, *Mudhākarah*, 243; Ibn Shākir, *Fawāt*, iii, 186; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, xxiv, 76. Vss. 2–3, 5, 4 are quoted anonymously in al-Shayzarī, *Rawḍat al-qulub*, 218. For another translation see Caswell, *The Slave Girls*, 96 (vss. 1–3); for a French translation see Huart, "La poétesse Fadhl", 35–36.

9 Instead of *ḥasana l-wajhi* some other sources have *ʿāliya l-sinni*, "of advanced age".

10 The edition, following the MS, has *fī l-adabī*, "in (your) behaviour", with a repetition that is surely an error, and I prefer to follow most other sources in reading *fī l-ṭarabī*; *Muwashshā* has *fī l-laʿibī*, "in (your) playing".

11 The Arabic shifts from plural to singular.

12 19–20 January 1869.

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Names and titles are given, sometimes abbreviated, as they appear on the title page. Entries in reference works such as *EAL*, *EI2*, *EI3* are not included when details are given in footnotes. The article (a)l-, in all positions, is ignored for the alphabetical order.

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